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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

A QUESTION OF HONOUR: THE FALKLAND ISLANDS CRISIS OF 1770

by

© RENEE SOULODRE-LA FRANCE

A THESIS

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OF MASTER OF ARTS

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EDMONTON, ALBERTA

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.....

Supervisor

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Date: 25. VII. 87.

My parents taught me to love
and revere the wisdom to be gained
from the written word.
I offer them these words with gratitude
and with love.

ABSTRACT

The Falkland Islands crisis of 1770 was an important event in eighteenth century British history as it affected numerous interests. It served to highlight the relationship between Spain and Britain during the latter part of the century and the commercial and imperial rivalries which existed between these two nations. An examination of the crisis and the press reportage which occurred because of the dispute provides insight into British national and international politics, as well as related aspects of the economy and society.

The opposition to Lord North's government saw the crisis as an opportunity to gain power and so, based its parliamentary campaign on this issue. A comparison and analysis of the debates about the dispute and the press coverage of the crisis, to the actual diplomatic negotiations makes it possible to achieve a greater understanding of the role of the opposition in eighteenth century British government, the importance of the House of Lords during this period, and the part which public opinion played in the formation of policy. This study also reveals the existence of several misconceptions maintained by historians about this event and many gaps in the historiography of the crisis. These areas of contention and underlying assumptions which historians have accepted, and which are inaccurate, are challenged so that a more accurate and complete picture of the 1770 crisis might be drawn.

PREFACE

The Falkland Islands crisis of 1770 captured the attention of most eighteenth century observers, and affected the lives of both British and Spanish subjects. This study of the events of 1770 and 1771 is primarily taken from the British political perspective, in order to show the effects which the dispute had on national and cabinet politics. There was a concerted effort on the part of the opposition to use this crisis as a means of ousting Lord North's ministry, so an examination of this parliamentary struggle reveals much about the nature of eighteenth century opposition, the individuals involved in the opposition campaign, and the way in which the British cabinet operated at this time. It is also possible to view this dispute from an altogether new perspective by analyzing it using an untapped historical source, that is, eighteenth century British newspapers. An examination of the English press reports about the Falkland Islands crisis will reveal to what extent the press influenced the formation of policy, the importance of public opinion to the government, and whether or not the eighteenth century press was used as a political tool.

There are still many gaps in the knowledge of this event and also some prevalent misconceptions held by several historians which should be revised. To this end, the following study includes an examination of the background to the crisis and the relationship which existed between Britain and Spain so as to place the dispute within its proper context. This is followed by an overview of British national politics in order to determine how the Falkland Islands crisis affected internal politics, including the parliamentary opposition campaign based on this dispute. The third part of this study is an examination of the crisis from the perspective of the British press, and a comparison of its reports about the dispute to the actual diplomatic negotiations. This examination will provide insight into the development and effects of the crisis upon the British public as well as politicians. Finally, the concluding chapter is a historiographical survey of several pertinent questions which have not been satisfactorily answered, and which will be studied in light of more recent research. In this way, the areas of contention about this event which need further research will be highlighted, and underlying assumptions, which historians have accepted and which may be inaccurate, will

be challenged so that a more complete picture of the 1770 crisis can be drawn.

Table of Contents

Chapter — Page

ABSTRACT vi

PREFACE vii

I. A CRISIS IN THE MAKING 1

II. INTERNAL TENSIONS AND TURMOIL 20

III. THE PRESS AND POLITICS 47

IV. THE HISTORIANS AND MORE RECENT CONCLUSIONS 79

BIBLIOGRAPHY 106

A. Printed Primary Sources 106

Official and Parliamentary Sources 106

Contemporary Correspondence and Memoirs 106

Pamphlets and Periodicals 107

Pamphlets 107

Periodicals 107

B. Secondary Sources 108

Books 108

Articles 110

Unpublished University Theses 111

I. A CRISIS IN THE MAKING

The background to the 1770 Falkland Islands crisis stretches far beyond the actual settlement of the islands by the British in 1764. There are aspects of the dispute between England and Spain which are crucial to an understanding of the events initiated by Commander Juan Ignacio Madariaga when he forcibly expelled the British garrison at Port Egmont on 10 June 1770; but these are not immediately apparent. One of the important factors was the state of relations between the Spanish and the English prior to 1770. These were instrumental in developing the international temper which made it possible for the events of 1770 to occur. An examination of this aspect of the crisis will make it possible to place the events leading up to the Falkland Islands dispute within their proper context, thereby providing a more complete understanding of the crisis and its effects.

One of the more important considerations relative to the Falkland Islands dispute was the attitude of the British towards the Spanish as a people, and as rivals. The eighteenth century was a time of evolution in the relations between Spain and Britain. Since the wars in the sixteenth century between Philip II and Elizabeth I, there had existed between the two nations, feelings of mutual distrust and animosity. These sentiments were heightened by religious tensions and imperial competition. Such attitudes were further exacerbated by the British aversion to what was perceived as Spanish absolutism, especially after the war of the Spanish Succession ended in 1713 with the triumph of the Bourbon Philip V. The English were positive that their delicately balanced constitution, consisting of the King in Parliament, was the best and most advanced system which existed and they protected it jealously. The relations between the two nations were governed by attitudes of guarded hostility which did not improve over the course of the eighteenth century. There also existed among those English conscious of international tensions, a profound feeling of mistrust towards the Spaniards, as expressed by Lord Chatham in the House of Lords when he stated that "the Spaniards are as mean and crafty, as they are proud and insolent... With their Ministers I have often been obliged to negociate, and never met with an instance of candour or dignity in their

proceedings; nothing but low cunning, trick, and artifice."[1] There was a prevalent belief that the Spanish nation had a particular antipathy to the English, which was perhaps an unconscious admission of the uncertainty of British claims in the South Seas. This sentiment gave substance to the avowal by some British observers that the Spanish were simply seeking a reason to attack the British, and that they did not really care about the Falkland Islands but were merely using the English settlement there as a convenient excuse to initiate hostilities. It was stated in the *Public Advertiser* by the correspondent Domitian, who also wrote under the pseudonym Junius and was notorious for his criticism of the government, that even

> If Falkland Island had never existed, the Rancour of the Spaniards would not have failed to discover itself in some other mode of hostility. Their whole history, since the accession of Philip the Vth, is a continued proof of a rooted antipathy to the name of Englishman; and I am justified, by a series of indisputable facts, in affirming that, from the Treaty of Utrecht to this hour, there has never been a single instance of common justice or decency, much less of cordiality or friendship in the conduct of the court of Madrid towards this country.[2]

Although these feelings of mutual animosity were present, there was also a sense that the English were lacking in knowledge about the Spanish nation and some newspapers attempted to rectify this by printing bits of information about various aspects of the Spanish economy, politics and national character.[3] These reports were generally critical, as British arrogance and assurance of superiority were always evident in the presentation of the Spanish character. For example, when discussing the Spanish colonies and their political characteristics it was always assumed that these territories would eagerly grasp at the chance for independence from Spain and that "the oppressive measures of some Governors in that part of the world, have so irritated the people, that they are careless under what Government they live, so they can protect their property."[4]

Notwithstanding the cultural and political differences which existed between the two nations, one of the areas of greatest contention was imperial rivalry and the constant commercial jostling which occurred as Spain and Britain attempted to gain economic

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[1] *Debrett*, iv, p. 345.
[2] *Junius' Letters*, p. 486.
[3] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 15-17 October 1770 and *Gazateer*, 8 December 1770.
[4] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 18-20 April 1770.

dominance. From the Spanish point of view, it was Britain, not France, which had emerged by the eighteenth century "as the chief enemy and most immediate danger."[5] From the sixteenth century on, the British had been motivated to try and carve out a share of Spain's expanding American silver trade. This interest in usurping Spain's source of bullion led, in part, during the early eighteenth century, to the concession by the Spaniards of the *asiento* privilege at the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht, and to various commercial treaties which were favourable to British merchants trading with the colonies through Cadiz and Lisbon. The *asiento* which was granted to the South Sea Company allowed that company to carry on a slave trade directly in the Carribean. This was thought to be a very important concession on the part of Spain, which was still attempting to maintain its colonial monopoly, because "the South Sea Company now had its foot in the door, as it were, while all other foreign traders had to smuggle their goods through the back windows."[6] This arrangement never operated to the satisfaction of the Spanish government, as it facilitated British smuggling as a means of trading directly with the Spanish colonies. Traditionally, English merchants had been allowed to trade with the Iberian colonies only indirectly, as everything which made its way into the colonies was supposed to pass through either Cadiz or Lisbon. This policy was an attempt by the Spanish Crown to keep a tight control on the American trade and to try and reap as much profit through taxes as possible. However, during the eighteenth century, various developments occurred which impeded this manner of trading and finally caused, in the latter part of the century, a complete change in the way British merchants envisioned profitable commerce with the colonies, and thus, a concommitant alteration in their interests.[7] The changes occurring were in part caused by the Bourbon monarchs' attempts to rationalize the administration of their empires so that Spain might profit to a greater extent from her vast American holdings. In an effort to rid himself of the annoyance caused by Treaties of

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[5]Charles Gibson, *Spain In America*. (New York: 1966), p. 174.
[6]J.H. Parry and P.M. Sherlock, *A Short History of the West Indies*, (London: 1963), p. 101.
[7]Allan Christelow, "Great Britain and the Trade From Cadiz and Lisbon to Spanish America and Brazil, 1759-1783," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 27, (1947), p. 8.

Commerce which favoured the British, Charles III entered the Seven Years War hoping that a military defeat would force the British to concede their privileges; however, the opposite occurred when Spain lost the war.[8] The Iberian governments also tried to curb British encroachments on their trade in the latter part of the eighteenth century through economic reforms. For example, in Portugal, the First Minister, the Marques de Pombal, tried to make sure that it was the Portuguese nationals who benefitted from trade with Brazil by the formation of strictly Portuguese monopolistic trading companies.[9] The increasing problems which British traders faced when following the proper channels led them to seek other means of trading with Spanish America. The work of Christelow has shown that the British merchants realized that direct trade with the colonies would be far more lucrative and expedient if the colonial merchants could avail themselves of the necessary credit.[10] Christelow added that the colonial merchants were not in fact dependent upon credit from Spain or Portugal and this is also supported by the recent research about the large amounts of smuggling which existed, which, of course, was not dependent on credit of any kind.[11] The question of smuggling also raised the very delicate point of bullion smuggling, which the Spanish government absolutely refused to countenance. The English did not endear themselves to the Spanish court when British naval officers were arrested for bullion smuggling and the British government appeared to treat the matter lightly in 1768.[12]

The second half of the eighteenth century was characterized by clashes between the official Spanish policy and various British interests. These included serious attempts on the part of the Spanish officials to limit or eliminate British competition, not only in Spain but also in Europe and the Spanish colonies.[13] In so doing Spain not only attacked illicit trade, but

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[8]Charles Gibson, p. 174.
[9]Allan Christelow, pp. 12-13.
[10]Allan Christelow, pp. 20-21.
[11]David A. Brading, "Bourbon Spain and Its American Empire," ed. by Leslie Bethell, *Cambridge History of Latin America*, vol. I, (Cambridge: 1984), p. 410, and Magnus Morner, "The Rural Economy and Society of Colonial and Spanish South America," ed. by Leslie Bethell, *Cambridge History of Latin America*, vol. II, (Cambridge: 1984), p. 215.
[12]Allan Christelow, p. 11.
[13]Glyndwr Williams, *The Expansion of Europe in the Eighteenth Century: Overseas rivalry discovery and exploitation*, (New York: 1966), p. 191.

also challenged legitimate English trade by endeavouring to protect nascent Spanish industries. For example the Spanish government prohibited the importation of specific types of textiles from England in 1768, thereby eliminating the possibility of legally carrying those textiles to the colonies where they were in great demand. This caused increasing resentment among the British merchants.[14] Spanish actions during the eighteenth century, were to a great extent conditioned by Britain's insistence on furthering its commerce, at Spain's expense. The British refused to renegotiate treaties which were vaguely worded and which allowed, in turn, the opportunity for England to widen her circle of influence in Spanish territories. The English preferred treaties which could be interpreted in different ways because these prevented the Spanish from finding fault with official British policy; all that the Spanish could do was to punish individual interlopers when these were caught trading illegally.[15] From the Spanish perspective, Britain's naval supremacy enabled her to "exercise despotic hegemony"[16] over the seas and the Spanish dominions were no longer secure. Spain's only alternative, therefore, was to deal harshly with individual cases of English expansionism and this was interpreted by the British as aggressive behaviour. It was reported in two British newspapers that Charles III had decided that Spain would not tolerate any foreign settlements or foreign shipping on the South Seas and consequently, was interpreted to mean that the Spanish intention was to harass the British at every opportunity.[17] This mutual antagonism was manifested in the disputes between the Spaniards and British logwood cutters in the Bay of Honduras and hostile encounters between the '*guarda costas*' and British vessels.[18] It was also reported that the Spaniards had attempted to force a British sailor to tell them about the defenses of

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[14]Allan Christelow, p. 11.

[15]Vera Lee Brown, "Anglo-Spanish Relations in America In The Closing Years Of The Colonial Era," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 5, (1922), p. 386.

[16]Octavio Gil Munilla, *Malvinas: El conflicto anglo-espanol de 1770*, (Sevilla: 1948), pp. 121-122. "*La nación británica ejercía despoticamente la hegemonía en los mares, y no existía dominio hispano seguro, ante los intentos de establecerse en ellos los anglo sajones.*"

[17]*London Evening Post*, 29-31 January 1771 and *General Evening Post*, 26-29 January 1771.

[18]*Middlesex Journal*, 28 February-2 March 1771 and *Public Advertiser*, 12 December 1770.

Jamaica.[19] Stories such as these helped to fuel the British resentment towards what was thought to be Spanish insolence. By 1770, the general consensus in British mercantile and political circles was that the Spanish did not hold Britain in high enough esteem and that they were contemptuous of British naval power. This was linked to the prevalent belief that the signing of the Peace of Paris had been dishonourable and a diplomatic failure, and that the British form of government was an unstable one. As the contemporary observer Horace Walpole noted, "the contempt conceived for us by foreigners being the result of Lord Bute's peace, of the distracted and fluctuating counsels of the Courts, and of repeated changes of contradictory Administrations."[20] James Harris, who was the charge d'affairs to the court of Spain during the Falkland Islands crisis, wrote that Charles III had developed a deep personal aversion to the English as a nation and he "was taught that we were a restless and overbearing nation."[21] Accordingly, the Spanish Monarch had sought to crush the British during the Seven Years War and his failure to do so caused him to harbour a strong desire for revenge.[22] That defeat put an end to the hope that France and Spain could exclude the British from the European market and eliminate English commercial activities within Spain. Not only did Charles III have to admit the failure of his economic rationale for entering the war in the first place, but he also had to make even more concessions to the British at the Peace of Paris.[23] The developments between the signing of the Treaty of Paris and 1770 led to a strengthening of Spanish contempt for British diplomacy and this led, according to one scholar of the period, Nicholas Tracy, to "a general challenge to the supremacy of British sea power."[24] The relations between Spain and England during the years just prior to the Falkland Islands crisis

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[19]*Gazateer*, 19 December 1770.
[20]Walpole, *Memoirs*, iv, p. 121.
[21]*Malmesbury Diaries*, i, p. 51.
[22]Geoffrey Rice, "Great Britain, The Manila Ransom, and the First Falkland Islands Dispute With Spain, 1766," *The International History Review*, vol. ii, (3 July 1980), p. 409. Rice's interpretation is that Britain's failure to take advantage of circumstances in 1766 in order to obtain the Manila Ransom was a "spectacular defeat for British diplomacy" and that this encouraged the Spanish to be more daring in their foreign policy.
[23]Zenab Esmat Rashed, *The Peace of Paris 1763*, (Liverpool: 1951), p. 210.
[24]Nicholas Tracy, "The Falkland Islands Crisis of 1770: Use of Naval Force," *English Historical Review*, vol. 90, (January, 1985), p. 41.

were marked by mutual hostility and the desperate attempt on Spain's part to halt the persistent British efforts. So, though the governor of Buenos Aires, Francisco Bucareli, was said to have initiated hostilities against Britain without formal orders from Madrid, his actions did not deviate from the course advocated by his court.[25] This attitude was not constrained to the rivalry over the Falkland Islands, however, but was also characteristic of Spain's attempts to eliminate Britain's interference in what was perceived by Madrid to be a Spanish territory. The Treaty of Paris appears to have been viewed by contemporaries merely as a respite in the fighting between England and the members of the Family Compact.

France and Spain were forced to admit defeat in 1763, however, they immediately started planning and projecting how long it would take them to rebuild their power to a level where they might again challenge Britain. France's first minister, the duc de Choiseul, had predicted that his nation would be ready to resume hostilities in five to six years after the signing of the Peace of Paris.[26] This projection coincided perfectly with the occurrence of the Falkland Islands crisis, although the timing of that particular event was also subject to other influences. It was believed that France and Spain were looking for an opportunity to challenge Britain while that country was preoccupied with other matters, but that they needed a reason to fight which affected both their interests.[27] One of the factors which was critical to the development of the crisis was precisely the point that the Falkland Islands were not important to France and so that nation was hesitant to risk a war for their sake. For the Spanish, on the other hand, the British settlement of the islands was a direct challenge to the Iberian power's ability to defend her territory. Most historians agree that the establishment of Port Egmont was a flagrant denial of existing treaty agreements and of the previous settlement of the islands by the French. Notwithstanding the controversy about Britain's right of sovereignty to the Falkland Islands, it has been argued that the English did not even have the right to enter

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[25]Glyndwr Williams, p. 192.
[26]Julius Goebel, *The Struggle For The Falkland Islands. A Study In Legal And Diplomatic History*, (New York. 1927), p. 218.
[27]J.H. Parry, *Trade and Dominion. The European Overseas Empire in the Eighteenth Century*, (New York: 1971), p. 131.

the region.[28] This assertion was based on the fact that the British had agreed to cancel a previous expedition to the Falkland Islands when the Spanish court had protested against it in 1749.[29] The Spaniards, therefore, by the time they actually located the English settlement, were convinced that they had been wronged and that Britain should acknowledge and rectify Spanish grievances. The relations between the two nations were manifested by the mutual refusal to compromise. The Spanish had retaliated against British encroachments by refusing to discuss the Manila ransom,[30] by treating British vessels as smuggling ships and dealing harshly with the prisoners they took, and by publishing new trade regulations which were designed to eliminate British participation in commerce on the Spanish Peninsula.[31]

The result of this was the progressive increase in international tensions, thus providing the atmosphere in which an incident such as the Falkland Islands dispute could swell into a critical point of contention between the nations.[32] This interpretation is belied by the British historian D.A. Winstanley, who criticized the Spanish government's actions as "smacking of piracy" because its assault on Port Egmont was made when "friendly relations existed between England and Spain."[33] Though the relations between the two nations may have been friendly on the surface, in reality they were marred by these tensions and contentious issues. Both the Spanish and the English experienced a sense of grievance because of a background of strained

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[28]Fritz and Olga Hoffman, *Sovereignty In Dispute: The Falklands/Malvinas, 1493-1982*, (London: 1984), p. 50, and Julius Goebel, p. 201.

[29]Julius Goebel, p. 201.

[30]The Manilla Ransom had been a diplomatic issue of contention between Britain and Spain since the Seven Years War. During the war a squadron, financed by the East India Company, managed to capture Manilla and the Archbishop of the city agreed to pay a ransom in order to prevent the city from being sacked. The ransom was never fully paid and successive British ministries were vainly entreated to obtain satisfaction by the company. The Spanish government always maintained that the archbishop had had no right to promise the ransom and that the notion was completely contrary to international law. For a complete discussion of this issue see: Julius Goebel, pp. 224-25.

[31]Vera Lee Brown, pp. 409-410.

[32]Octavio Gil Munilla, *Malvinas*, pp. 78 & 81: "*las medidas adoptadas por España para impedir la hegemonía comercial britanica, y, por encima de todo, la persistente amenaza del Pacto de Familia, constituyen otros antos[sic] motivos de fricción que alejaban a las dos naciones.*"

[33]D. A. Winstanley, *Lord Chatham and the Whig Opposition*, (Cambridge: 1912), pp. 375-376.

relations over the decade, and these strains provided fertile ground for the Falkland Islands dispute.

Aside from the general sense of rivalry and animosity which existed between Britain and Spain and which had dominated their relations for most of the eighteenth century, there were also more immediate and concrete causes for the tension which existed. Notwithstanding the British belief that the Spanish held them in contempt, the Spanish monarch also had cause for complaint against English attitudes. An example of this was the case of a libel against Charles III which was printed in the *London Magazine* in September 1770 and which caused the Spanish ambassador to seek satisfaction in his monarch's name from Lord Weymouth, the British Secretary of State for the Southern Department.[34] The fact that Charles III had taken umbrage was reported in the English newspapers, but it was also stated that Weymouth had refused to prosecute the printers of the libel.[35] This kind of personal attack, which questioned Charles III's intellectual capacity, exacerbated the existing tensions between the two countries, so that when news of the expulsion of the British garrison at Port Egmont arrived in Madrid, the Spanish court was less disposed to be accommodating than it might have been. Another of the factors which was important to the outcome of this dispute, and which was an immediate cause of Spain's aggressive behaviour, was the Spanish belief that 1770 was a difficult time for the British government and that the English ministry would be loath to disturb the peace at a time when it might have to deploy its naval power in North American waters.[36]

Though the timing of Spain's actions was important, the actions themselves were not surprising considering some of the fundamental questions with regard to the Falkland Islands dispute. These included: why the British had decided to make a settlement there in the first place; whether or not they had a legal claim of sovereignty to the islands that would be recognized internationally; and whether or not the Falkland Islands were really worth all the

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[34] *London Magazine*, September 1770, pp. 443-444.
[35] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 17-19 September 1770 and *Middlesex Journal*, 20-22 September 1770.
[36] *Malmesbury Diaries*, i, Walpole to Harris, 1 December 1770, pp. 69-70, and Octavio Gil Munilla, *Las Malvinas*, pp. 72-73. "*la razon hay que buscarla en su confiada creencia de que Gran Bretana no turbaria la paz mientras tuviera sus navios en los mares del norte de America.*"

trouble they were causing for Britain. These questions were debated during the eighteenth century in newspapers and among interested observers, and are still discussed today in the historiography about the Falkland Islands. There was some doubt about Britain's right to settle on the islands even before 1765, when Port Egmont was established. The British claim rested on the right of discovery by Sir Richard Hawkins as early as 1593, and the supplementary assumption that it was absurd for Spain to claim sovereignty over this area when, in the words of one contemporary writer,

> these Islands lie at the distance of near 300 miles from the Continent and considerably more from any of the Spanish settlements in South America, the public may easily judge upon what right we found our claim."

This notion, however, was contradicted by those who believed that Britain had unjustly seized an island which fell clearly within the purview of Spanish influence and that the Spaniards' reaction to this act of aggression was perfectly understandable.[38] The situation was complicated further by the fact that at the time when Port Egmont was actually established there was already a French colony at Fort St. Louis which had been founded by Antoine Louis de Bougainville. Its existence was denied by the first Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Egmont; and even though there were suspicions about the existence of another colony, the government agreed to go ahead and establish British claims by actual possession.[39] There was also some controversy about the value of Port Egmont itself, notwithstanding the uncertainty of the British rights to the islands. At the time when the settlement on the Falklands became a matter of interest to the public, there were reports arguing both that this was "deemed a very important settlement, and not to be slightly given up on the part of Great Britain,"[40] and that the "ministry say they are heartily glad to get rid of this wretched settlement, a ricketty[sic] production of Lord Egmont, which has already cost the nation many thousand pounds."[41] The debate about the value of Port Egmont to the British empire naturally led to self-examination

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[37] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 17-19 October 1770 and *Public Advertiser*, 14 February 1771.
[38] *Public Advertiser*, 8 February 1771.
[39] Hoffman, p. 44, and Basil Williams, *The Life of William Pitt Earl of Chatham*, vol. II, (London: 1914), pp. 222-223.
[40] *Middlesex Journal*, 7-9 June 1770.
[41] *Middlesex Journal*, 1-3 November 1770.

and to explanations of why England found an outpost on the Falkland Islands necessary. There were several reasons for believing that the settlement was important, and these factors received varying acceptance according to the prevalent ideas about the form which the empire should take. The islands first came to the notice of the British government in 1748, after the publication of the accounts of Admiral George Anson's voyages of 1740-44, and their main attraction was their location at a strategic point for provisioning on any voyage around Cape Horn.[42] One historian places the origins of this idea far earlier with the descriptions of the Spanish explorer Francisco de Camargo in 1540.[43] By the eighteenth century it was thought by those people interested in establishing a settlement in the south Atlantic that "Falkland's Island is an object of the highest concern, not only for its being the key to the Spanish settlements, but a fine place for safety and refreshment to ships coming or going into the South sea."[44] The First Lord of the Admiralty, Egmont had written in 1765 that the islands were "the key to the whole Pacifick[sic] Ocean," and that a British settlement on them would be to the benefit of the English and to the detriment of Spain, as this would facilitate access to the trade of Peru, Chile, Panama and Acapulco.[45] The desire to expand British interests into the Pacific Ocean area was not particularly new and the notion that a settlement on the islands would make a good way station for trading vessels or warships had been considered in the 1740s. However, at that time the British had been dissuaded from setting up a colony because of Spanish protestations and because of diplomatic expediency, even though they never acknowledged any Spanish attempts to deny them the right to settle the islands.[46]

By the mid 1760s there was further impetus to form a settlement on the Falkland Islands because of the increasing imperial competition between Spain and Britain and the commercial rivalry which was causing the British merchants to consider innovative methods of forcing their way into the Spanish colonial markets. In 1764 the French ambassador to

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[42]Glyndwr Williams, p. 161.
[43]Fritz Hoffman, p. 22.
[44]*Bingley's*, #3, 23 June 1770.
[45]Julius Goebel, quoting Egmont to Grafton, 20 July 1765, p. 236, and Glyndwr Williams, p. 191.
[46]D.A. Winstanley, pp. 372-373.

England wrote that there were several Peruvian and Chilean merchants who were travelling to Spain themselves, in order to purchase their merchandise directly, and it was thought that a circumvention of Spanish middlemen would be to the advantage of both those merchants and British traders.[47] One of the main factors stimulating interest in a settlement on the Falkland Islands, therefore, was actually encouraged by the Spanish monarchy's attempts to eliminate British participation in Iberian commerce. The justification given in one journal for establishing Port Egmont was that

> new, great, and beneficial sources of commerce might be opened in that quarter.[Chile] It was also then thought, that the greatest and most advantageous fishery in the world might be established in it, and navigators say, that an hundred whales are to be met with in the high southern latitudes to one that is to be found on the coasts of Greenland.[48]

Though the primary value of the Falkland Islands was thought to be in their function as a way station on the route around Cape Horn, and this in itself was an important addition to the empire, there were also reports that "the high lands in Falkland's Island, from their vicinity to the rich mountains of Chile, are thought to contain some of that precious metal with which all the world is enamoured.[49] Not only were the English wrong on this count, but this report also illustrates their misconceptions about Latin American geography and the distances between the Falkland Islands and Chile, which were certainly not in the same vicinity.

The concept of precisely what form the British empire should take was being debated during this period. One of the predominant ideas advocated during the eighteenth century was direct trade with the Spanish colonies, a notion which was given further impetus by Iberian attempts to control the existing colonial trade, but also because of the other matter of grave concern for the British, the Spanish alliance with France.[50] It is generally agreed that the British sought to augment their trade with Latin America, particularly in the newly expanding

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[47]Allan Christelow, p. 21.
[48]*Annual Register*, 1771, p. 4.
[49]*Lloyd's Evening Post*, 26-29 October 1770 and 21-24 September 1770.
[50]Peggy K. Liss, *Atlantic Empires: The Network of Trade and Revolution, 1713-1826*, (Baltimore: 1983), p. 19.

areas such as Venezuela and Buenos Aires.[51] However, historian H.B. Ferns has also suggested that the post-Seven-Years-War era was characterized by a definite imperial policy of "establishing off-shore commercial and military bases around the edge of the Spanish empire."[52] The logic behind this scheme was that by establishing themselves at strategic bases all around the Spanish empire, the British could reap the benefits of trading with those Spanish American colonies and yet avoid the actual costs of administering and maintaining the colonies.[53] Aside from these developments, which by the mid-1760s made a settlement on Falkland Islands appear increasingly attractive, there also existed a more fundamental reason for retaining a foothold on the islands. This was the recognition by the British that even if the empire did not obtain concrete benefits from this establishment, the English still had the satisfaction of knowing that they were angering and worrying the Spanish, and perhaps even impeding their trade with the colonies.[54] Even if the islands were completely worthless to the British, it was still believed that simply annoying the Spanish was ample reward because "if the Spaniards are anxious to keep the English out of the South Seas, 'tis a good reason why the English should endeavour to effect settlement in those parts."[55] The idea conveyed by this letter to a newspaper aptly illustrates the tenor of Anglo-Spanish relations after the Seven Years War.

This context provided the setting in which a crisis such as that of 1770 could occur. Nicholas Tracy has suggested that the main reason the British settled the Falkland Islands in the first place was to ensure that the Spanish would remain constantly aware of Britain's naval strength. Thus, although the settlement at Port Egmont was not inherently important, it was however of some value to Britain's endeavours to defeat Bourbon attacks and "restore the

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[51]James Lockhart and Stuart B. Schwartz, *Early Latin America, A History Of Colonial Spanish America and Brazil*, (Cambridge: 1983), pp. 336-365.
[52]H. B. Ferns, *Britain and Argentina in the Nineteenth Century*, (Oxford: 1960), p. 224.
[53]This interpretation was suggested by Prof. D. C. Johnson in one of our many discussions about the British motives for seeking to establish themselves on the Falkland Islands.
[54]*Middlesex Journal*, 12-14 February 1771.
[55]*Middlesex Journal*, 14-16 February 1771.

credibility" of Britain's naval strength.[56] Basil Williams also wrote that the islands themselves were not of fundamental importance to the British. Williams based this assessment on the notion that the British, during Chatham's tenure as first minister, in 1766, were willing to use the Falkland Islands as a bargaining chip in order to obtain the Manila Ransom and "the right of England to navigate in the Southern Seas."[57] While Julius Goebel also suggested that the Manila Ransom may have been a consideration in the decision to establish Port Egmont, he discounted this argument in favour of the notion that the British were intending to expand their commerce and impede Spain's trade by "preying upon Spanish trade in peace as well as war."[58] Tracy's interpretation that the islands were valued only as a symbol is contradicted by the arguments in favour of expanding British commerce because, in that case, Port Egmont would serve a very real practical purpose as a base for the encroachment on the Spanish colonies. Another vital factor in Britain's approach, stressed by Allan Christelow, was that Spain was supposedly on the verge of eliminating the Acapulco-Manila trade and substituting for it trade between Cadiz and Manila via the Cape Horn route. Britain considered this to be a violation of existing treaties and was willing to try to interfere with this development through its post at Port Egmont.[59] Port Egmont, therefore, had been established in order to answer several purposes. Though the British may have unconsciously relished the idea of maintaining the garrison there simply to prove to the Spanish that the British navy could support even the most insolent actions, this is very difficult to prove and can be disputed by examining other, more practical considerations.

The fact remains that for a variety of reasons, some of which are not revealed in the available manuscript sources, the British government sent an expedition, led by Captain John Byron, to take possession of the Falkland Islands in the spring of 1764. This was followed by the establishment of Port Egmont on West Falkland Island in January 1765.[60] The islands

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[56]Nicholas Tracy, p. 52.
[57]Basil Williams, pp. 223-224.
[58]Julius Goebel, pp. 230-231.
[59]Allan Christelow, pp. 23-25.
[60]The chronology of events discussed forthwith is based on Julius Goebel, pp. 221-270.

were inhospitable and the garrison which made up the establishment at Port Egmont was never able to attain self-sufficiency. Indeed, one letter from Port Egmont stated that the men had to travel more than twenty miles in order to hunt or fish and that even this distance would soon have to be increased.[61] The contemporary physical descriptions of the Falkland Islands are all very negative and the consensus seems to have been the same as the opinion of a member of the garrison which was stationed at Port Egmont just prior to the crisis:

> In short, it is the most barren, desolate country, I suppose, in the world. We were exceedingly happy when we were relieved from it; and still more so when the Spaniards came to drive us away from Falkland's Islands.[62]

Despite the fact that the Falkland Islands offered a daunting physical environment, the French had established a colony on East Falkland Island prior to the British settlement at Port Egmont. On 5 April 1764, Antoines Louis de Bougainville had taken possession of the *Malouines*, as the French called the Falkland Islands, in the name of Louis XV, and set up a colony at Fort St. Louis. The Spanish vigorously protested this action through diplomatic channels, and the court at Versailles convinced Bougainville to give up the colony in exchange for compensation of 618,108 livres, 13 sous and 11 deniers,[63] so that the friendly relations embodied in the Family Compact might be maintained. On 1 April 1767, therefore, Bougainville gave over his settlement to the Spanish, who renamed it Puerto Soledad and put it under the command of a governor, Don Felipe Ruiz Puente. The colony was thereafter within the jurisdiction of the governor of Buenos Aires, Don Francisco Bucareli.

There had been a public announcement of the French occupation of the Falkland Islands on 13 August 1764 which had initiated the Spanish protests because this area had traditionally been viewed as Spanish territory. This notion was upheld and strengthened by France's agreement to cede the colony to Spain. Though the English government had never publicized the establishment of Port Egmont, the Spanish suspected that it existed, but they did not know the precise location. On 29 December 1766, the Secretary of State for the Indies, the Count de Arriaga, wrote to Bucareli that he should seek out and locate any settlement

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[61] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 23-26 November 1770.
[62] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 10-12 October 1770, *Middlesex Journal*, 11-13 October 1770 and *Annual Register*, 1770, pp. 152-153.
[63] Julius Goebel, p. 228.

made by the British. He was to instruct his commanders that "in approaching the spot where they may light upon the settlement, they are to tax the strangers with intruding within His Majesty's dominions, as if surprised to find them there, in violation of treaty obligations and against the harmony subsisting between the two nations; and they are to protest against such contravention."[64] The Spanish preoccupation with the possibility of finding a British settlement within their territories was manifested in the notion that Spain should try to intervene in the English contraband trade on the Rio de la Plata, and this resulted in the general order from Charles III dated 13 November 1767, stating that his representatives in the New World should "keep a sharp look out," and stop the English from settling or trading illicitly in his territories.[65] The officials of the Spanish crown were given even further leeway in early 1768 when the Minister of the Marine and the Indies issued a general order to Governor Bucareli that suggested if the use of force was deemed necessary in order to keep the English out of the area, then that expedient should be taken at Bucareli's discretion. As Arriaga wrote to Bucareli:

> His Majesty commands me to strenuously charge Your Excellency to keep very much on the alert against permitting them to gain any foothold whatsoever; and, if admonitions framed in accordance with the statutes should fail of their purpose, you are to expel the English by force from the post they may be holding, without waiting for any further command or instructions.[66]

This series of commands from Madrid concerning a possible English settlement in the South Atlantic culminated in the letter sent to Bucareli by Arriaga on 6 August 1768 which gave him the precise location of Port Egmont, taken from the testimony of several sailors who had been there, and provided the governor with further incentive to act upon his general orders by stating that this information "may serve for your guidance in giving effect to orders which have been communicated to you."[67]

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[64]Bolton Glanvill Corney, *The Quest and Occupation of Tahiti by Emissaries of Spain during the Years 1772-1776 Told in Despatches and Other Contemporary Documents*, (London: 1913), p. 49.
[65]B.G. Corney, p. 101.
[66]cited in B.G. Corney, p. 109.
[67]cited in B. G. Corney, pp. 144-145.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Spanish were actively looking for the English on the Falkland Islands as early as 1768, it was not until 28 November 1769 that a Spanish ship met with the English Captain Hunt in the frigate *Tamer* from Port Egmont.[61] Hunt warned the Spanish away from the Falkland Islands, claiming that these were the domain of the British king, and so began a series of communications between the official representatives of the two nations, each claiming the islands in the name of their respective sovereigns and each warning the other away. This resulted in two official protests by the governor of Puerto Soledad, Philip Ruiz Puente, and then on 20 February 1770, two Spanish frigates, with troops on board, sailed to Port Egmont where they remained for eight days, after which their captains decided to seek directions from Madrid. On 3 June 1770, Captain Hunt, having departed from the islands soon after meeting the Spanish ship in November, arrived at Portsmouth, and immediately sent notice of the altercation to the Admiralty. Meanwhile, on 4 June 1770, two Spanish frigates arrived at Port Egmont where they were joined by four more on 7 June 1770, under the command of Juan Ignacio Madariaga. On 8 June 1770, the two British Captains, Maltby and Farmer, asked the Spaniards to leave. However, on 9 June, the Spanish commander sent them a message again claiming the islands in the name of Charles III and ordering the British to leave. He also asked that an English officer review his troops to remove any doubts about the superiority of his forces. This was done, but the English captains refused to surrender without having fired a shot, thus causing the Spanish to use force in order to expel the garrison, which could thereafter be considered an act of war. Accordingly, on 10 June 1770, the Spanish began landing their troops under cover of fire. The British garrison responded with two volleys of cannon fire and then hoisted a white flag. Thereafter, formal articles of capitulation were signed by captains Maltby and Farmer and Major General Madariaga, and the English agreed to leave. They were delayed, however, by the removal of the rudder on their sloop, the *Favourite*, in order that news of these events should reach Spain before they were made known in England. The *Favourite* arrived at Portsmouth on 22 September 1770, having taken seventy days to make the voyage, so she left

[61]The following chronology is taken from the *Annual Register*, 1771, pp. 7-12.

Port Egmont only thirty-four days after the capitulation.

The first news of these events reached England on 10 September 1770, via James Harris, in his letter of 23 August 1770, when he wrote that he had received some news from Buenos Aires by the ship *St. Nicolas de Bari*. He said he had heard that "a squadron of five frigates, with three hundred men of the regiment of Mallorca, and the old battalion of Buenos Ayres, were destined to sail from that place the 6th of May, under the command of Monsieur Madarriaga [sic], with orders to dislodge the English there."[69] Harris went on to say that he had not been able to obtain a confirmation of this information, although he did state that several people thought May would have been the wrong time of year for a fleet to sail to the Falkland Islands. As it turned out, the Spanish force did make its way to the islands and its overwhelming superiority over the small British garrison indicated that the Spanish government had taken this affair very seriously. In England, several accounts of the events of 10 June 1770 were printed in the newspapers after the arrival of the *Favourite* in late September. These all focussed upon the overwhelming odds in favour of the Spanish and gave detailed descriptions of the forces involved.[70] One of the newspapers printed an eyewitness report of what had occurred at Port Egmont on 10 June 1770. This report stated that when Madariaga was ordering the British to leave the islands, he said "that he had orders from his Court to drive them from it *three years* before, but could not find the harbour out, till the two Spanish frigates discovered it."[71] This fact certainly cast doubt upon the fiction which the British and Spanish governments were later forced to accept in order to negotiate a settlement to the dispute--that Bucareli had acted upon his own initiative, without any specific orders from Madrid. This also gave credence to Walpole's contention that "the Governor of Buenos Ayres, within whose district lay the desert in question, was ordered (underhand) to dispossess us, and did. That intention had been known to our Administration some months before the

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[69] *Malmesbury Diaries*, p. 59.
[70] For examples of these reports see: *Middlesex Journal*, 25-27 September and 4-6 December 1770, *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 28 September-1 October, 8-10 October and 5-7 December 1770, *Bingley's*, #18, 6 October and #27, 8 December 1770, *Gazateer*, 7 December 1770 and *Annual Register*, 1770, p. 147.
[71] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 12-14 December 1770.

Duke of Grafton quitted the reins."[72]

The immediate cause of the Falkland Islands crisis, therefore, was the publication of the events of 10 June 1770 in England. Though the government knew of these events before the public, it was generally thought that the settlement was of no great concern to the ministry, as it felt that Port Egmont could easily be retaken, "but the affront offered to the nation in taking it, is looked upon as the greatest."[73] The several other causes of the crisis were more obscure, more profound, and less immediate than the superficial reasons offered by actual events. In fact, when the capture of Port Egmont by the Spaniards became known, it was greeted with considerable surprise because "that of which we were almost weary ourselves, we did not expect anyone to envy: and therefore supposed that we would be permitted to reside in Falkland's Island, the undisputed lords of tempest-beaten barrenness."[74] The crisis which occurred was caused by a mixture of injured national pride and dignity and commercial rivalry, but it gained impetus from deeper political reasons, which helped shape the development of the crisis, and which must be examined if an understanding of 1770 is to be achieved. The events following Bucareli's actions did not, therefore, simply "stem equally from the arrogant and absurd extravagance of Spanish claims to territory in the New World and from the mindless warmongering which overtook the English when confronted even with trivial insults,"[75] but also from traditional animosities and rivalries between the two nations and internal British politics which were intimately linked to the development and outcome of the dispute.

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[72]Walpole *Memoirs*, iv, p. 114.
[73]*Middlesex Journal*, 29 September-2 October 1770.
[74]Samuel Johnson, "Thoughts on the Late Transactions Respecting Falkland Islands (1771)," in *Samuel Johnson Political Writings*, ed. by Donald J. Greene, (New Haven: 1977), p. 358.
[75]Paul Langford, *Modern British Foreign Policy. The Eighteenth Century: 1688-1815*, (London: 1976), p. 159.

II. INTERNAL TENSIONS AND TURMOIL

It is possible to gain insights into eighteenth century British politics through an examination of the Falkland Islands crisis. When this dispute is viewed from a British political perspective it can tell a definite tale about the state of the ministry in 1770, the role which the king played in the government, the nature of cabinet politics, and the nature and role of the opposition within the British constitution. This dispute is particularly relevant to the latter question because the opposition quickly recognized the Falkland Islands controversy as a possible vehicle to power. It is possible, therefore, to examine their actions in order to determine to what lengths they were organized, if they had serious ideological differences, and what kind of tactics they were willing to employ in order to bring down the government and obtain power. Insights into these matters will give a better understanding of the concept of opposition as it was viewed in the eighteenth century, as well as a greater knowledge of the people who were actually involved in these political disputes.

The state of the British ministry at the outset of the Falkland Islands crisis is generally thought to have been unstable. There was some doubt that Lord North's ministry would be able to withstand the vicissitudes of opposition attacks in parliament, when so many other ministries had failed in the 1760s. However, it soon became obvious to some contemporaries that he had a strong hold on the House of Commons and was well on his way to consolidating his administration's power. "Lord North bids fairer for making an able and good minister than any we have had a great while."[76] Notwithstanding this contemporary assessment, the weight of historical scholarship favours the notion that North's ministry was weak,[77] and that this weakness would be exploited by the opposition during the crisis, forcing the English ministry to "show a bold front against Spain."[78] It was also thought that even if the opposition did not cause the government to act against its will, George III might. The

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[76]Lord Barrington to the British envoy in Berlin, 24 April 1770, cited in P. D. G. Thomas, *Lord North*, p. 37.

[77]See for example Julius Goebel, p. 278.

[78]*Fitzmaurice*, i, pp. 416-417, and Ricardo Zorraquín Becú, *Inglaterra prometió abandonar Las Malvinas. Estudio historico y jurídico del conflicto anglo-español*, (Buenos Aires: 1975), p.53.

Whig interpretation of history which described George III as a power-seeking monarch, attempting to extend the crown's prerogatives beyond constitutionally acceptable boundaries,"[79] has since been discredited by other historians. Once the king had finally chosen a minister who was acceptable to both parliament and himself, he let him govern, though he was always willing to voice his opinion when this was solicited."[80]

North, therefore, was much more firmly ensconced than has traditionally been thought. The ministry had successfully overcome its true baptism of fire the previous March, when it repealed Townshend's Duties Act and still "maintained a firm command of business in the Commons."[81] This idea was not a new one, however, as it had been reported in the *Annual Register* and was quoted in the *Parliamentary History of England* that

> lord North had successfully weathered all the storms of the winter, supported by a prodigious majority, upon almost every occasion, he seemed now to be as securely fixed in his seat at the head of the treasury, as the fashion of the times, and the precarious circumstances that might attend the commencement of the war would admit of.[82]

Thus the state of North's ministry at the beginning of the Falkland Islands crisis was much more stable and much stronger than has often been thought to be the case by both his contemporaries and historians. The study of the Falkland Islands crisis presents a first-rate opportunity for an examination of the concept of opposition in eighteenth century British politics. Indeed, the opposition campaign in parliament which was based upon the Falkland crisis became so heated that for a while the dispute appeared to be "more a question of domestic than international politics."[83] This was because the government's opponents seized upon this dispute as a means of creating a unified opposition to the ministry's handling of the negotiations with Spain. The crisis presented several possibilities which the opposition could exploit in order to attack government policies. The very concept of a habitual political opposition to the government was still undergoing discussion in 1770, and there was some

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[79]G.B. Hertz, *British Imperialism in the Eighteenth Century*, (London: 1908), pp. 129-130.
[80]P. D. G. Thomas, *Lord North*, p. 39.
[81]Philip Lawson, *George Grenville, A Political Life*, (Oxford: 1984), p. 285.
[82]*Parl. Hist.*, xvi, pp. 1030-1031.
[83]Julius Goebel, p. 364.

doubt as to the morality or legality of systematically opposing the policies of ministers who had, after all, been appointed by the king. On the positive side of this debate there existed the opinion which was expressed by a correspondent to the *Gazateer* that "in times of public tranquility, a rational opposition to some measures of administration might be productive of advantage to the nation. We know how apt even the best men are to slumber in office in this indolent age."[14] There were, however, risks involved in adopting systematic opposition, because its members might become motivated by self-interest rather than the nation's interest and this was particularly dangerous during periods of international tensions.[15] These fears appeared to have been borne out in 1770 when the opposition parties challenged the government over the Falkland Islands crisis.

In the summer of 1770 the main parties in opposition were led by the Marquis of Rockingham, George Grenville and the Earl of Chatham, while the Duke of Bedford's followers voted against the administration on some issues though Weymouth and Gower were ministers. By the opening of the session of parliament on 13 November 1770, the opposition parties were at low ebb because of the death of George Grenville, the ill health of Chatham and Bedford, and Rockingham's preoccupation with his wife's illness.[16] The opposition's decision to use the Falkland Islands crisis was criticized as purely a scrabble for power caused by their complete lack of influence in parliament. In light of this, a correspondent to the *London Magazine* wrote that the "patriots seem insidiously desirous of sacrificing both [welfare and honour] to the views of their popularity" and that "rendered desperate by their total insignificance within doors, they are indefatigably sedulous, to preserve some little consequence among the rabble without; and are therefore continuously harassing your lordships with such questions, as seem likely to excite the admiration of their supporters in the suburbs."[17] There were a few authors who defended the ministry against opposition attacks as early as September 1770, basing their arguments on the fact that the opposition was

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[14]*Gazateer*, 22 November 1770.
[15]D. A. Winstanley, p. 392.
[16]Carl B. Cone, *Burke and the Nature of Politics. The Age of the American Revolution.* (Lexington: 1957), pp. 212-213 and Francois Rousseau, p. 76.
[17]*London Magazine, Appendix*, 1770, p. 647.

using unfair tactics in trying to frighten the public over the possibility of a war, and that it was "by raising a panic in the nation that they hoped to drive North and his colleagues from office."[88] The reason the opposition was denigrated, in many instances was that interested observers believed that its influence could alter the course of events and cause the ministry to act in an unyielding manner, and that the ministers were "governed by their fear of the opposition."[89] That there was some truth to this is shown by the suggestion that North might postpone the opening of parliament on 13 November 1770 until he received a definite answer from the court of Spain. The king, however, responded that he was "convinced that it would be improper as that Court and that of Versailles would upon it augur that we are resolved at all events to accommodate the present dispute, and consequently would encourage them to raise perhaps so much in their demands as would make war absolutely necessary."[90] The notion that the opposition was irresponsible in its attempts to stir up war fever was based upon the premise that the only person capable of directing a war ministry was Chatham, and that a war would automatically bring down North's ministry.[91] This put the opposition in the unenviable position of "appearing to desire the humiliation of their country" so that they might come into power.[92] It seemed, therefore, to many of his contemporaries, that when Chatham returned to politics he did so in order to destroy the kind of broadbottom ministry which he had always claimed he desired, causing his motives to reek of self-interest.[93] Though the Falkland Islands crisis provided the opposition with an issue that might win them the votes of independent members and upon which the various opposition parties could find common ground, there were also severe drawbacks to using an international dispute in order to change the course of domestic politics. These disadvantages served to call into question the integrity of the opposition and initiated a new round in the discussion about whether or not the institution of systematic opposition was desirable.

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[88] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 26-28 September and 28 September 1 October 1770 and *Gazateer*, 27 November 1770, and D. A. Winstanley, p. 393.
[89] Julius Goebel, p. 294.
[90] *George III, Correspondence*, ii, King to North, 9 November 1770, p. 166.
[91] D. A. Winstanley, pp. 370-371 and Julius Goebel, p. 306.
[92] Carl B. Cone, p. 210.
[93] J. Steven Watson, *The Reign of George III 1760-1815*, (Oxford: 1960), p. 152.

Notwithstanding these arguments, the opposition leaders did try to unite their disparate forces and though they fought campaigns against the government in both houses, it was from the Lords that the decisions were issued, and in the House of Lords that the bitterest battles were waged.[94] As soon as news of the dispute was known in England, Rockingham's follower, Lord Richmond, wrote to the marquis' secretary, Edmund Burke, that this news "shews who were in the right, those who proposed the augmentation of seamen or those who rejected it."[95] In this note Richmond referred to a motion by the opposition during the previous session that the number of sailors should be increased, which had been rejected by the ministry. On the opening of the parliamentary session with the speech from the throne on 13 November 1770, the opposition in both houses criticized the ministry's decisions and policies. There was no formal motion made in either House challenging government policy, though there was some discussion about the wording of the Address of Thanks to the king. In the Commons there was an extensive debate about the Address of Thanks, as the opposition took this opportunity to embarrass the government. They had seized upon the part of George III's speech in which he announced that "those very considerations which I then promised you that I would never sacrifice, even to the desire of peace, have laid me under an indispensable necessity of preparing for a different situation."[96] The necessity of preparing for war gave the opposition the perfect opportunity to attack government policy and this attack was launched immediately on 13 November 1770 in the Commons. The administration attempted to steer the debate away from any discussion of military preparations by focussing on its willingness to defend the national honour, though not, as it happened, because of the intrinsic value of the Falkland Islands. In his speech supporting the ministry, George Rice, MP for Carmarthenshire, played down the idea of responding to the Spanish insult by force, stating that

> the abuse of a drunken beadle, after a parish dinner, might as well be supposed a reasonable cause for a gentleman to draw his sword, as the seizing Falkland Island, considering merely the act and the agent, can be supposed a reasonable cause for

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[94]D. A. Winstanley, p. 394.
[95]*Burke's, Speeches*, ii, Richmond to Burke, 10 June 1770, p. 142.
[96]*Debrett's* , iv, p. 337.

Great Britain to take the field."

Rice's defense of the ministerial failure to prepare for war immediately after the attack upon the islands was also based upon the premise adopted by the government that the hostile act had been committed solely by the governor of Buenos Aires and not under the direct orders of the Spanish court.

The opposition proceeded to attack the government from these two angles, as they quickly recognized that they were the weakest points in the ministerial defence. Not only did Edmund Burke attack the ministers' inaction, but he also denigrated their personal abilities, and then introduced the idea that they had turned to the French seeking the intervention of the court of Versailles in the dispute. Burke stated that the ministers had acted like sleeping men and when

> at last they were roused from sleep, then it was some months before they could recover their senses: reason they never could recover, for they never had reason to lose: they jumped about like a squirrel at the sight of a cat, they leaped and squatted, and whisked their tail about, and ran into a hole; and in what hole did they take refuge? Why the ministry of France. They applied to France as a mediator to accommodate their differences with Spain."

The three main opposition tactics were introduced to the House of Commons on the first day parliament sat. These were that the ministry had acted irresponsibly by not arming the nation much sooner, that the ministers were trying to cover up their errors by putting the entire blame for the dispute upon the governor of Buenos Aires, and that they had allowed the French to interfere in the negotiations. Lord North answered these charges in the Commons by stating that the Falkland Islands were expendable in the eyes of the administration and were not deemed a "sufficient cause for war." In that case, "it was a proper object of negociation; and if so what could be more prudent than to have an opening for accommodation, by referring the act in question to the governor of Buenos Aires, which the King of Spain might if he pleased, disavow?"" He also stated that "Great Britain had no need of a mediator," and would never, therefore, apply to France to intervene in England's foreign

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"*Parl. Hist.*, xvi, pp. 1036-1037.
"*Parl. Hist.*, xvi, p. 1046.
"*Parl. Hist.*, xvi, p. 1050.

policy.[100] It was, however, the first line of attack upon which the opposition focussed the initial thrusts of its campaign. In light of this, Sir Charles Saunders, MP for Hedon, whose knowledge about naval matters was highly respected because he had travelled around the world with Anson and led Wolfe's forces down the St. Lawrence before the conquest of Quebec, stated that "the captains of both the *Tamer* and *Favourite* should be called to the bar, and give an account of what the Spaniards had done, and what information the ministry had received."[101] The idea that the ministry had acted irresponsibly by not arming the nation much sooner was also supported by William Dowdeswell, MP for Worcestershire and the leader of Rockingham's party in the House of Commons. Speaking of the ministers, he said, "the whole party have not had sufficient invention to suggest one plausible excuse for keeping the nation naked and defenceless, after authentic intelligence of the insidious designs of the House of Bourbon had been received."[102] Lord North himself responded to these accusations, although his rebuttal was weakened by the fact that it insinuated a lack of knowledge about the navy among the opposition, which certainly could not have applied to Sir Charles Saunders, who, after all, had been First Lord of the Admiralty. North stated that "Everybody, except the gentlemen in the opposition, knows, that our fleets cannot be fitted out except when our trade is at home, or just coming home because sailors are at no other time to be had."[103] The administration's defense was that since it could not arm the country effectively at that precise moment, then it had been better to appear not to be arming at all so as not to give the Bourbon powers any warning. This argument was quickly recognized by the opposition as a weakness on the government's part and they continued to attack the ministers on this point. The first day of the session ended without a division, however, although it had served as a means by which the opposition could introduce the various arguments it would reiterate throughout the Falkland Islands dispute. Care had to be taken, however, for the opposition was conscious of appearing factious in opposing the government's foreign policy

[100] *Parl. Hist.*, xvi, p. 1050.
[101] *Parl. Hist.*, xvi, p. 1051.
[102] *Parl. Hist.*, xvi, p. 1052.
[103] *Parl. Hist.*, xvi, p. 1054.

during an international crisis. Nevertheless, as the Chathamite Colonel Isaac Barré said of the function of opposition in a seemingly hopeless cause, "however low opposition may be reduced, on its present ground it will be always honourable. Should we dwindle to ten we shall always go out of this House, ten respectable figures, still reminding the nation of what its representatives ought to be."[104] The sentiments which the opposition had introduced to the Commons on 13 November were certainly not new, as they had been vented in October in the Press;[105] however, they were the foundation upon which the opposition campaign was based for the duration of the negotiations with Spain.

The opposition campaign from this point on was highly organized, with attempts to coordinate the activities between the various opposition groups and between both Houses of Parliament. There had been a meeting before the opening of the parliamentary session at the Marquis of Rockingham's house, but there was not much that they could plan until they knew what was to be presented in the king's speech.[106] After 13 November, there was much discussion between Rockingham and Chatham, who agreed that "a plan should be soon formed so that in both Houses of Parliament the proceedings should go on hand in hand."[107] Chatham also recognized the importance of "communicating sentiments" and the two leaders agreed that their initial plan of attack should be to criticize the "neglect of the ministers as to war" and the "neglect of administration in not having prepared earlier."[108]

The opposition recognized the value of the Falkland Islands as an issue which could serve well in its struggle to unseat the ministry, but the leaders were also counting on other factors to contribute to Lord North's downfall. As John Calcraft (MP for Rochester and a loyal follower of Chatham) wrote, there had not been a great showing of the opposition on the opening of parliament, but even so, he said: "The ministers do not seem at their ease.

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[104] *Parl. Hist.*, xvi, p. 1060.
[105] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 10-12 October 1770 and *Bingley's*, #21, 27 October 1770.
[106] *Public Advertiser*, 14 November 1770.
[107] *Chatham Correspondence*, iii, Rockingham to Chatham, 15 November 1770, p. 490.
[108] Rockingham *Memoirs*, Rockingham to Chatham, 15 November 1770, pp. 193-194, and *Chatham Correspondence*, iii, Rockingham to Chatham, 15 November 1770, p. 490.

Lord North's speech indicated a strong desire of peace, though an apprehension of war."[109] The fact that there was dissension within the cabinet was not a secret and the opposition sought to exploit this to its own end.[110] The next attack upon the government's policy was carefully coordinated, as the opposition introduced similar motions in both Houses on 22 November. Before this was done, the wording of the motions had been discussed by the opposition leaders and it was decided that "in general, the ideas are that confining the debate to what may have passed in the course of the last twelve months or thereabouts, will render the debate more pointed and perhaps more forcible."[111] Chatham informed Calcraft on 21 November 1770 that the motions were "for papers with regard to Falkland's Island, and the Spanish force in the West Indies,[112] and these were in fact moved by William Dowdeswell in the Commons and by Lord Richmond in the House of Lords. Richmond's motion called for

> copies or extracts of all letters, and other papers containing any intelligence received by any of his Majesty's principal Secretaries of State, the Commissioners for executing the Office of Lord High Admiral of Great Britain, or any other of his Majesty's Ministers, between the 12th day of September 1769, and the 12th day of September 1770, touching any hostilities commenced, or designed to be commenced, by the Crown of Spain, or any of its officers, against any part of his Majesty's dominions, expressing the times at which such intelligence was received.[113]

The careful wording of this motion was important because it foreshadowed the kind of objections to the motion which might be, and in fact were, raised by the ministers. Richmond's basic premise for the motion and his main point of attack in the speech which followed was that from 3 June 1770 to 12 September 1770, the ministry had done nothing and that the armaments which they said were under way had not yet produced any visible effects. He told the Lords that the negotiations had been under way for three months and parliament had still not received any information as to what kind of satisfaction could be expected from Spain. The motion itself demanded a limited amount of information in order to obviate the

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[109]*Chatham Correspondence*, iii, Calcraft to Chatham, 14 November 1770, p. 489.
[110]Frank O'Gorman, *The Rise of Party in England. The Rockingham Whigs 1760-82*, (London: 1975), pp. 279-280.
[111]*Chatham Correspondence*, iii, Rockingham to Chatham, 20 November 1770, pp. 491-492.
[112]*Chatham Correspondence*, iii, Chatham to Calcraft, 21 November 1770, p. 493.
[113]*Lords Journals*, xxxiii, 22 November 1770, p. 12.

anticipated objections of Lord Weymouth, the Southern Secretary. Richmond insisted that "he only meant to obtain for the House some accurate information of circumstances leading to and some accounting for a fact which was itself notorious and undisputed."[114] He added that the ministers should have accepted the opposition's suggestion to augment the number of seamen and that this "proposal for the strengthening the hands of government had been rejected, merely because it came from that quarter."[115]

Richmond's speech and motion were initially answered by Lord Weymouth who stated that he was opposed to the motion because laying the papers concerned before parliament might upset the delicately balanced negotiations with Spain. This answer fell rather flat in light of the careful wording of Richmond's motion, which demanded only the papers before 12 September 1770 precisely in order to get around such ministerial objections. It was also noted that when Weymouth spoke, he "carefully avoided giving the least light or intimation whatsoever concerning the actual state, or progress of that negotiation, and expressed himself with caution and reserve."[116] This caution was probably due to the fact that on 22 November 1770, Weymouth was not optimistic about the outcome of the negotiations and wrote to James Harris the next day ordering him to remain on the alert and to keep other British officials in Spain and Gibraltar informed. Lord Hillsborough also stood and defended the ministry's refusal to produce the Falkland papers, reiterating Weymouth's arguments about the negotiations.[117] Lord Chatham then delivered a long diatribe in which he managed to convey his distaste for the Spanish and for those ministers who would treat with them. Chatham again questioned the ministry about the timing of the first reports concerning the Spanish hostilities at Falkland Islands. He also demanded information about the state of the negotiations and vilified the ministers for their willingness to negotiate, asking them, "will you descend so low? will you so shamefully betray the King's honour, as to make it matter of negotiation whether his Majesty's possessions shall be restored to him or not?"[118] Chatham

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[114] *Debrett*, iv, p. 341.
[115] *Debrett*, iv, pp. 341-342.
[116] *Debrett*, iv, p. 346.
[117] *Debrett*, iv, pp. 342-342.
[118] *Parl. Hist.*, xvi, p. 1094, and *Debrett*, iv, p. 346.

also chastized the aldermen of the city of London, who had tried to obstruct the effective issuance of press warrants. In an attempt to portray the opposition as patriotic and solely concerned with the national good, Chatham separated himself from these men who in other circumstances had been his allies. "I wholly condemn their conduct, and am ready to support any motion that may be made, for bringing those aldermen who have endeavoured to stop the execution of the Admiralty warrants, to the bar of this House."[119] Chatham's complaints about the negotiations were answered by Earl Gower on the government's behalf. He justified the decision to negotiate by pointing out that the actual rights of sovereignty to the islands were "neither so ancient nor so clear, as the noble Lord would insinuate." This he claimed, was "a reasonable plea for our negociating with Spain."[120] Lord Shelburne then rose and accused the ministry of failing to attack Spain in response to this insult because of their fear that a war would cause them to lose their offices. He did not aid the image of the opposition which Chatham and Rockingham were painstakingly trying to foster, that of defenders of the nation's interests, when he stated that "indeed, if there was a likelihood, that the difficulty of conducting the military operations of an injured people, would force them from the employment they disgrace, it would be actually worth our while to commence a war, merely for the purpose of gaining a fresh administration."[121]

This line of argument left the opposition wide open to government charges that it was made up of self-interested, place-seeking individuals who were willing to sacrifice the nation's interests for their own. At the end of the debate, therefore, Lord Sandwich spoke in defense of the government by attacking the opposition's integrity. He addressed the Lords, saying,

> who, however, let me ask are the pillars of the Opposition? discarded courtiers with their hungry retainers; men rendered implacable by dismission, and desperate through necessity; men who are maddened at having lost their places, and who would do anything to recover them: they will not, I hope, be offended at this imputation of venality; they deal very largely in imputations of venality themselves, and must not be astonished at recrimination.[122]

The previous question was then put, when 65 were for it, and 21 against it. Thus Richmond's

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[119] *Parl. Hist.*, xvi, p. 1101.
[120] *Parl. Hist.*, xvi, p. 1111.
[121] *Parl. Hist.*, xvi, p. 1114.
[122] *Parl. Hist.*, xvi, p. 1117.

initial motion was defeated while the others were negatived without a division.[123]

The opposition faired just as poorly in the House of Commons on 22 November 1770, when William Dowdeswell presented a motion identical to Richmond's in the Lords. During a long debate the opposition members again attacked the ministers for their willingness to accept the governor of Buenos Aires as a scapegoat, and Thomas Pownall, MP for Tregony and a former governor of Massachusetts Bay, stressed the need to defend the settlement on Falkland Islands even though it was of little practical value. Pownall stated that the settlement was of "little utility," but "having been once made, it could not be given up."[124] Pownall's support was important to the opposition, as he was considered to be knowledgeable about colonial affairs. The motion calling for papers was politically astute because whether or not it passed, it could still embarrass the government. On the one hand, if the ministers refused to produce the papers, they would appear as if they had something to hide; on the other, if they did lay the papers before parliament their contents would surely reinforce the opposition's charges of irresponsibility in dealing with Spanish hostilities in the early stages of the dispute. The motion was also a wise political move because it was aimed at the independent MPs, as it appeared to be an honest demand for necessary information. To this end, John Calcraft "said he was an independent gentleman, a follower of no man, or set of men. He thought we ought to begin with amending what was amiss at home, and was for production of the papers."[125] Calcraft was, of course, a devoted follower of Chatham, so this was obviously a conscious attempt to influence the independents. The argument aimed at the independent gentlemen seemed to be effective, as Lord Bellasyse claimed that he was independent and had come to parliament to do his duty, but that he could not do this without the necessary information, which the papers would provide. After this occurred, however, his brother-in-law, Lord Melbourne, came and took him home to dinner, and when he returned, Bellasyse rose and in a second speech stated that "he had changed his mind, that having the papers he thought would be very improper; that he had a very good opinion of his Majesty's servants, and promised to

[123] *Parl. Hist.*, xvi, p. 1119.
[124] *Parl. Hist.*, xvi, p. 1120.
[125] *Parl. Hist.*, xvi, p. 1120.

vote against having the papers. He voted with the ministry."[126] This occurrence demonstates the relative ease with which an independent MP could be swayed and the basis for opposition aspirations of winning votes away from the government.

The government, however, was also skillful at using procedure in order to evade embarrassing debates and divisions. The debate on the motion by Dowdeswell on 22 November was one such occasion, because, as previously mentioned, the ministers did not want to defeat the motion flagrantly by dividing upon the question; nor did they want to end the debate abruptly by moving to adjourn. They were, however, conscious of the need to end the debate without appearing to avoid the issues and so Charles Fox, MP for Midhurst and a member of the Admiralty Board, rose and moved that the previous question be put. The motion for the previous question was made as the government sought to avoid an embarrassing division on a delicate topic, by forcing a vote on whether to continue the debate and ultimately to divide upon the issue. The government would then defeat its own motion, causing the debate to end inconclusively. This procedural device effectively ended the debate on the motion for that day; however, it did not preclude the reintroduction of the motion later during the session. It was generally understood, though, that the previous question was "full as direct as an affirmative or negative."[127] When using this kind of device, the government risked being accused of obstructing the business of parliament, but this difficulty was obviously offset, in some cases, by the ending of a debate that was proving embarrassing for the ministry. In this event the House divided on the previous question, with the ministry defeating the opposition 225 to 101.[128]

Although this first attempt to use the Falkland Islands crisis to bring down the government was unsuccessful, the topic was still mentioned in the opposition members' correspondence. For instance, they speculated about the possibility of a war, and both Chatham and Lord Shelburne agreed that they thought war was a probability.[129] Apart from

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[126] *Parl. Hist.*, xvi, p. 1121.
[127] Cited in P. D. G. Thomas, *House of Commons In the Eighteenth Century*, (Oxford: 1971), p. 179.
[128] *Parl. Hist.*, xvi, p. 1124.
[129] *Chatham Correspondence*, iv, Chatham to Shelburne, and Shelburne to Chatham, 26

these speculations, the opposition members met at Chatham's residence in order to plan their strategy. It was reported in *Lloyd's Evening Post* that the Duke of Northumberland, the Marquis of Rockingham, Lord Shelburne and several others of the nobility had held a meeting with Chatham on 25 November 1770.[130] After this meeting, a new twist was added to the opposition attacks upon the ministry. They agreed, as Rockingham wrote to Chatham, that they "should still keep to the line of attacking the administration for their neglect in not arming earlier, and try by all means to force them to lay before parliament and the public those intelligences, which, in my mind, will prove strongly their neglect."[131] The new dimension to this reasoning was that Rockingham thought they could involve the public in the opposition campaign and that this could make a difference to the parliamentary divisions. Rockingham wrote that even if the members of parliament were under government control and voted that there was no "ground for blame", he felt that the public would not be so sympathetic to the ministers and that the public's influence was not to be discounted.[132]

The next attack upon the ministry occurred in the House of Lords on 28 November 1770, when Lord Chatham moved "that Captain Hunt, late Captain of the *Tamer* sloop, be ordered to attend this House on Monday next."[133] This motion was objected to; there was a debate after which the previous question was put which was then resolved in the negative. It was then moved that George III order that the House "be acquainted, at what time the first demand was made for reparation from the crown of Spain, for the injuries to the honour of the Crown and the rights of the people received at Falkland's Island."[134] This was objected to and then the government again avoided the issue by moving to adjourn, which was resolved in the affirmative. The division reported in the newspaper stated that the motion to adjourn had been carried 54 to 20.[135] Chatham had tried to solicit support for his motion privately, as well as by the force of his oratory. He hoped to win Lord Camden's vote on this issue but he was

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[129](cont'd) November 1770, pp. 25-27.
[130]*Lloyd's Evening Post*, 23-26 November 1770.
[131]*Chatham Correspondence*, iv, Rockingham to Chatham, 26 November 1770, p. 28.
[132]*Chatham Correspondence*, iv, Rockingham to Chatham, 26 November 1770, p. 28.
[133]*Lords Journals*, xxxiii, 28 November 1770.
[134]*Lords Journals*, xxxiii, 28 November 1770.
[135]*Lloyd's Evening Post*, 28-30 November 1770.

unsuccessful, as that nobleman stated that Chatham's new motion was too similar to the Duke of Richmond's for him to be able to vote for it and maintain any consistency. He wrote to Chatham that

> as to the present motion, it has too strong a resemblance to the motion of last Thursday, to make my attendance upon the one consistent with my absence on the other; and therefore I hope your Lordship will consider me as under a necessity of not appearing in the House of Lords.[136]

This evidence of an attempt at soliciting votes by Chatham coincided with his assertion that a crisis had arisen in the opposition and it was falling into ruin. His lack of faith in the opposition was made clear when he wrote to Calcraft on the same day that "I think all is ruined, and am determined to be found in my post when destruction falls upon us. The times are pollution, in the very quintessence; and the little maneouvres in Opposition behind the scenes are deplorable."[137] This example of Chatham's willingness to abandon the opposition campaign demonstrates that there was no true ideological principle linking the various opposition groups, and that Chatham felt no loyalty towards his allies, despite his protestations to the contrary to Rockingham. That some members were willing to compromise their beliefs in order to win points against the ministry was evidenced by Gerard Hamilton, MP for Old Sarum and a follower of Lord Temple. He wrote to John Calcraft that the Spaniards

> refuse, however, to disown the act of the governor; but say, I think very manly, that what he did was by their order, but that they are sorry for it, and are willing things should be put exactly in the situation they were. Opposition must of course say, this is an indignity not to be put up with.[138]

Hamilton realized that even if the Spanish were quite reasonable, the opposition would gain only if they could show that the ministry was incapable of winning satisfactory compensation for the Spanish insult. Therefore, even if individual members thought that justice had been done, the opposition as a group would be forced to adopt the contrary posture that a compromise would be dishonourable. Hamilton's solution to the problem was "to send for Lord Chatham" because he could frighten the Spanish into acquiescence without resorting to

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[136]*Chatham Correspondence*, iv, Camden to Chatham, 28 November 1770, pp. 29-30.
[137]*Chatham Correspondence*, iv, Chatham to Calcraft, 28 November 1770, p. 32.
[138]*Chatham Correspondence*, iv, Hamilton to Calcraft, 3 December 1770, pp. 25-26.

war.[139]

The members of the opposition in the House of Lords then decided that the next tactic they should use against the government was that of "addressing the crown to quicken all necessary succours for Gibraltar, and perhaps Jamaica."[140] This motion was made accordingly on 11 December 1770 by the Duke of Manchester; however, as he was expounding upon the defenceless state of the nation, and especially of Gibraltar, he was interrupted by Earl Gower, "who desired that the House might be cleared of all but those who had a right to sit there; he observed, that when motions were brought on by surprise, and the members of that House had no previous notice to guess at what they might consist of, and when upon those motions such things came out as ought not to be publicly divulged, no persons but peers should hear them."[141]. Lord Richmond stood and defended Manchester's motion, saying that Gower's demand would alarm the people; however, this caused virtual chaos in the House and calls of "clear the House" were all that could be heard. Finally, because they could not make themselves heard, Chatham and several other opposition peers left the House, though they entered a formal protest upon the Journals which was signed by seventeen peers and which stated that

> this proceeding (too manifestly premeditated and prepared) to have been for no other purpose than to preclude inquiry on the part of the lords; and under colour of concealing secrets of state, to hide from the public eye the unjustifiable and criminal neglects of the ministry, in not making sufficient and timely provision for the national honour and security.[142]

This event was significant because it demonstrated the importance of public opinion to the opposition's campaign regarding the Falkland Islands and the significance of the ministry's decision to invoke the standing order No. 112. The opposition had made no secret of the fact that their attacks upon the ministry's lack of military preparations were thought to have more effect outside parliament than within and Earl Gower's move to have the House cleared, ostensibly because of the delicate nature of the debate, effectively robbed the opposition of a far larger, more sympathetic audience. The opposition's sentiments about these occurrences

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[139]Ibid.
[140]*Chatham Correspondence*, iv, Chatham to Camden, 8 December 1770, pp. 46-47.
[141]*Parl. Hist.*, xvi, p. 1318.
[142]*Parl. Hist.*, xvi, p. 1320.

were best expressed by Lord Chatham when he wrote that "for the House being of late kept clear of hearers, we are reduced to a snug party of unhearing and unfeeling lords, and the tapestry hangings; which last, mute as ministers, still tell us more than all the cabinet on the subject of Spain, and the manner of treating with an insidious and haughty power."[143]

The next confrontation between the ministry and the oppostion came in the House of Commons on 12 December 1770, over the issue of the Land Tax. Henry Seymour, MP for Huntingdon and a follower of the late George Grenville, moved that the committee of ways and means "not proceed to consider of an aid to be granted to his Majesty, by a Land Tax, to be raised in Great Britain, for the service of the year 1771, until after the next recess for the Christmas holidays, several members being absent in the country."[144] The government challenged this motion on the grounds that peace was precarious and that the French and Spaniards were making great preparations.[145] The opposition, however, upheld the argument that since the threat of war was not certain, the land tax was not an absolute necessity. The attacks upon the ministry became quite vitriolic and "in short they were attacked from all sides of the House, upon their ignorance, baseness, and cowardice." The division upon this motion, however, was carried by the government, 199-121 for the negative, a very good showing for the opposition just before the Christmas recess.[146] One of the effects of this motion was to give government supporters ammunition against the opposition because it was not consistent with their previous attacks upon the ministry's lack of military preparations and made the opposition members appear "more factious than patriotic."[147] The opposition was portrayed by a ministerial writer as "busied in making motions that are either factuous, [sic] or frivilous; in drawing exaggerated pictures of the weaknesses and distresses of the nation, to provoke insults from abroad, and create despondency at home...."[148] Though this issue also caused the government to appear inconsistent, at least the ministers could argue that

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[143]*Chatham Correspondence*, iv, Chatham to Countess Stanhope, 16 December 1770, pp. 54-55.
[144]*Parl. Hist.*, xvi, p. 1330.
[145]*Parl. Hist.*, xvi, pp. 1330-1331.
[146]*Parl. Hist.*, xvi, p. 1331.
[147]D. A. Winstanley, p. 396.
[148]*Public Advertiser*, 17 December 1770.

it was better to be prepared for any contingency, even if they did not believe a war was likely to occur.

For the rest of December and well into January 1771, the opposition concentrated on the negotiations over the Falkland Islands dispute and speculated about the possibility of a war occurring, though the consensus was that peace would be maintained.[149] This was despite the prevailing sentiment that the peace, somehow or other, had been "strangely bungled", as Walpole so aptly put it.[150] The rest of the opposition campaign based upon the Falkland Islands dispute was focussed upon the declaration by Prince Masserano and the acceptance by Lord Rochford which resulted in the agreement called the Spanish Convention and which were presented to parliament on 25 January 1771. The first news which the opposition members received of this agreement came from John Calcraft. He wrote to Chatham on 21 January 1771 that,

> at this very moment, I believe the compromise is concluded. My own judgement assures me, it is the most ignominious one that ever was made for this country, and I have the surest information to confirm me in my opinion. I am now convinced that there are no conditions to which Lord North was not determined to submit. If there had been one spark of shame, a single atom of honour, in the composition of our ministry, war was inevitable.[151]

The next day, on 22 January, the declaration was announced in parliament and it was stated that it would be laid before parliament on 25 January 1771. Even before he saw the contents of the declaration, therefore, Calcraft had already passed an unfavourable judgement upon it, and the opposition eagerly grasped at the first concrete object upon which they could focus their attacks. This came at a particularly critical time for the "united" opposition because on 21 January they had lost several of George Grenville's talented followers to the government. Lord Suffolk, thereafter held the Privy Seal, Wedderburn became Solicitor General, Thomas Whately joined the Board of Trade and Augustus Hervey became a Lord of the Admiralty.[152] The defection was not numerically devastating for the opposition; however, it was

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[149]*Chatham Correspondence*, iv, Hamilton to Calcraft, 20 December 1770, p. 62, and *Walpole Correspondence*, xxiii, Mann to Walpole, 14 January 1771, p. 261.
[150]*Walpole Correspondence*, xxiii, Walpole to Mann, 15 January 1771, p. 263.
[151]*Chatham Correspondence*, iv, Calcraft to Chatham, 21 January 1771, p. 68.
[152]L. H. Brown, *The Grafton and North Cabinets 1766-1775*, (unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Toronto: 1963), p. 305.

demoralizing.

In an effort to gain more support, Edmund Burke demanded a call of the House, having asked Lord North when he planned to discuss the agreement in parliament.[153] Burke's motion for a call of the House was a procedural tactic which was generally only proposed by opposition or independent members. As it served to bring in all of the independent members, if it was well timed and the debate convincing enough, it could prove very useful to an opposition party. This tactic, however, could work the other way if it was used indiscriminately or too often, because it forced MPs to come to Westminister, which was its goal; but this could also be very annoying to country gentlemen busy with their estates, and could cause them to be ill-disposed towards the party which had made the motion.[154] Notwithstanding these risks, Burke moved that a call of the House be scheduled for 14 February 1771, when the agreement with Spain was to be discussed.

There was a mixed reaction to the declaration, but the opposition was firm in its disapproval. In this instance, Chatham declared that he was willing to unite with anybody who was against the convention. He wrote to Calcraft: "I meet with sincerity and cordiality whoever stand for the rights of the people, and for the national honour. Both trodden down in this sad state of pollution and degeneracy."[155] The furore caused by Lord North's announcement of the agreement was quickly channelled into an attempt to organize, coordinate and whip in support for the opposition. To this end, Dowdeswell held a meeting at his home on 24 January 1771, and he invited John Calcraft to attend as Chatham's representative. Calcraft wrote to Chatham informing him of the meeting and asking whether or not he should attend. He also mentioned that "the Rockingham friends in our House are courting confidence and union with your Lordship and those attached to you, with unusual eagerness."[156] The Rockinghams were indeed seeking to confirm Chatham's support. They

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[153]*Commons Journals*, "Ordered, That this House be called upon this Day Fortnight, the 5th day of February next. That such Members shall not then attend, be sent for in Custody of the Serjeant-at -Arms attending this House." This motion was also reported in the *General Evening Post*, 22-24 January 1771.
[154]P. D. G. Thomas, *House of Commons*, pp. 108-109.
[155]*Chatham Correspondence*, iv, Chatham to Calcraft, 23 January 1771, p. 83.
[156]*Chatham Correspondence*, iv, Calcraft to Chatham, 23 January 1771, p. 81.

were suffering from Rockingham's absence, as he was attending his wife who was ill, and so the leadership of the party fell to the Duke of Richmond. He wrote to Chatham inviting him to an organizational meeting for the opposition in the Lords on 23 January 1771, and he also expressed his concern that the Grenville defection might cause further thinning of the opposition ranks. He wrote that "indeed, it seems necessary, after the late defection, that we should show no langour, but by some spirited conduct tell the world, as early as possible, that we remain steady and firm in the cause we have undertaken..."[157] At these meetings it was decided that the best course of action would be another motion calling for all the papers regarding the events at Falkland Islands and the negotiations with Spain, since 1 June 1770.[158] This correspondence between Barré and Chatham indicates the extent to which the campaigns in both Houses were coordinated. After Lord North had presented Massarano's Declaration to the Commons, Dowdeswell rose and spoke against this statement and its acceptance, in the same tone and with the same arguments that were being presented in the House of Lords, and then moved that the papers concerning the negotiations be made available. The ministers claimed to accept this motion with an amendment suggested by North, which in essence lessened the degree of injury which the British subjects were said to have suffered. After a long debate which included subtle arguments about the phrasing of ideas, in which the oppositon accused the administration of trying to create a smoke screen in order to blind the members and mislead them, the motion was passed.[159]

According to the opposition, the most glaring omission in the agreement was the failure on Spain's part to offer any compensation for the expenses which England had incurred because of the dispute. Colonel Barre rose in the Commons and complained that "there is not a word of the expense in the Declaration. At this rate, it will always be in the power of an inferior nation, nay, even of an individual to ruin us, who have nothing to do but to take a rock from us and put us to three million expense, to preparations to recover

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[157] *Chatham Correspondence*, iv, Richmond to Chatham, 23 January 1771, p. 79.
[158] *Chatham Correspondence*, iv, Chatham to Barré, 24 January 1771, and Barre to Chatham, 24 January 1771, pp. 84-86.
[159] *Parl. Hist.*, xvi, p. 1343.

it."[160] Lord North denied ever having said that Britain's expenses would be paid by Spain and then the members started arguing about who was remembering what North had promised correctly. Finally Dowdeswell agreed to North's amendment and the debate ended.

Meanwhile, in the House of Lords, the government was under fire from opposition peers. First of all, the Duke of Manchester made the motion asking for information about the "designs of Spain upon Falkland's Island."[161] This was followed by some adept political maneouvring as Lords Rochford and Sandwich attempted to amend the motion and this was objected to by the opposition lords. After some debate, the original motion was agreed to without alteration, having been justified by Chatham's claim that the agreement was "an ignominious compromise", and that it "was no satisfaction; no reparation."[162] The Duke of Richmond then made another motion regarding the tabling of all the correspondence relative to the negotiations between the ministers and their French counterparts, because, "as the world had strange suspicions that France had too much to do in this transaction, it was necessary to clear this matter."[163] This motion was contested by Lord Rochford, who stated that these papers did not exist and so could not be produced. Chatham, however, strongly supported the motion and claimed that the "refusing this motion shewed that some transaction with France had passed, perhaps not paper or memorials."[164] One of the former followers of George Grenville, Lord Suffolk, then showed his support for the ministry by stating that if the ministry said there had been no negotiations with France, "he thought that assurance fully satisfactory."[165] This point about whether or not France had interfered in the negotiations was thought to be of some importance because if that had been the case, "it would be giving efficacy to the family compact."[166] The opposition also chose this time to introduce the question of sovereignty over the islands. Richmond stated that the declaration

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[160] *Parl. Hist.*, xvi, p. 1344.
[161] *Parl. Hist.*, xvi, p. 1338.
[162] *Parl. Hist.*, xvi, p. 1339.
[163] *Parl. Hist.*, xvi, p. 1340.
[164] *Parl. Hist.*, xvi, p. 1340.
[165] *Parl. Hist.*, xvi, p. 1341.
[166] *Debrett*, iv, p. 375.

was unacceptable because it caused the right of sovereignty to be brought into dispute.[167] These attacks upon the ministry's foreign policy were strengthened because the opposition now had something concrete to complain about. Nevertheless, they had lost the advantage which might have been gained if the ministry had been forced to fight a war with Spain. So, on the one hand, the existence of the declaration gave the opposition a rallying cry and focal point of attack when they had been foundering and losing adherents, but on the other hand, with the removal of uncertainty about whether or not a war was imminent, they also lost a valuable salient.

There was further discussion among the opposition members about precisely how they should approach the meeting of parliament now that their motions concerning the Falkland papers had been accepted. The Rockingham party was especially eager to meet with Chatham and determine what would be argued. To this end, Richmond wrote to Lord Chatham suggesting a meeting "to prepare matters for the Friday following; and if any further information is wanting, to settle a motion for obtaining it."[168] There appears to have been some disagreement about which arguments against the ministry should be emphasized. Rockingham agreed that the declaration was a dishonourable compromise, and that this should be stressed; however, he wrote to Edmund Burke:

> I have no objection to sounding high the dishonour this country has suffered, but I think the object should be to shew the defenceless state this country was in-in September and to shew how highly culpable the administration has been in having neglected taking earlier precautions. That the very existence of this country had been endangered by their supine neglect. That their conduct had been the encouragement to Spain to venture to insult us.[169]

Another of the agreement's failings perceived by the opposition was that it was merely an expedient and that the government's continuing armament buildup meant that a war would nonetheless occur; "that the present convention, instead of being the confirmation of peace, will be only the prelude to a war."[170]

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[167] *Parl. Hist.*, xvi, p. 1340.
[168] *Chatham Correspondence*, iv, Richmond to Chatham, 30 January 1771, p. 89.
[169] *Burke Correspondence*, ii, Rockingham to Burke, 30 January 1771, p. 188.
[170] *General Evening Post*, 29-31 January 1771.

The opposition also further attempted to embarrass the government by trying to prove the French had interfered, and Seymour therefore moved, on 4 February 1771, that the king should instruct that "this House be informed, whether the Court of France did interfere in the late Negotiation with the Court of Spain."[171] This motion caused a division and was defeated 173 to 57. The motion itself only served to show the opposition's weakness at this point. The government was in a strong position because, as George III wrote to North,

> after the very open communication that has[sic] this day made to Parliament of the entire transaction on the dispute with Spain, Mr. Seymour's motion has no appearance of candour, and cannot consequently do honour to the supporters of it, but be advantageous to Administration as it shewed so great a Majority in their favour.[172]

On 5 February 1771, Chatham questioned the very essence of the agreement when he challenged, in the House of Lords, the administration's use of the Declaration as an instrument for restitution because it included the "reservation of disputed right of sovereignty." He stated that this could not be "carried into execution, without derogating from the maxim of law before refered[sic] to, touching the inherent and essential dignity of the Crown of Great Britain."[173] Before making this motion, Chatham sought Lord Camden's advice as to the legality of the declaration and acceptance; however, Camden was not optimistic about the success of such a question. He stated: "I will not say that my opinion is fixed or unalterable but I dare not avow that the acceptance is illegal, as at present advised." He added that he hesitated to disagree with Chatham, "but in matters of law, I must always think for myself."[174] Chatham's motion was defeated.[175]

The last major opposition attack based upon the Falkland Islands issue took place on 13 February 1771 in the House of Commons and on 14 February 1771 in the House of Lords. Prior to 13 February, the opposition was already trying to determine what the ministry's course of action would be, and how this could most effectively be counteracted. Richmond accurately predicted what would occur when he wrote to Rockingham on 12 February 1771:

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[171]*Commons Journals*, xxxiii, 4 February 1771, p. 139.
[172]*George III, Correspondence*, ii, King to North, 4 February 1771, p. 215.
[173]*Debrett*, iv, p. 376.
[174]*Chatham Correspondence*, iv, Camden to Chatham, 5 February 1771, p. 92.
[175]*Parl. Hist.*, xvi, p. 1355.

"We expect the ministers will start first and move an address of thanks. We shall endeavour to get the lead but in the Lords they may do as they please, as the House determines who shall speak first, but in the Commons it is the Speaker (who is at present out of humour) and may call to Dowdeswell first. The debate and division may be as strong against a fulsome address, as upon the resolutions, but we must have the resolutions stand on the Journals."[176] The motion for an Address of Thanks was duly made by Lord Beauchamp, and seconded by Palmerston. The debate about the agreement was probably presented in this manner because the Address was directed at the king, and this was calculated to play upon those independent members' loyalties. One MP who traditionally voted with the administration stated:

> I lamented in common I believe with many, that this question came into discussion upon a motion for an Address. Duty and affection to his Majesty, sense of the magnanimity of the royal mind, and reverence for the general virtues that have place there, are sentiments ever uppermost in my heart; and it is extremely irksome to me to avoid any occasion to give them expression.[177]

Notwithstanding these sentiments, he later voted against the ministry, causing the king some surprise; "the seeing Colonel Burgoyne's name on the side of the minority appears so extraordinary that I almost imagine that is a mistake."[178] Dowdeswell led the debate by proposing an amendment to the motion that would delete all but the first paragraph, thereby withholding an expression of approbation for the ministers' conduct. He then added that should his amendment be accepted he proposed to move the acceptance of thirteen resolutions(the same resolutions which Richmond mentioned to Rockingham in the letter above) which categorically condemned the ministry's handling of the whole crisis.[179] The declaration and acceptance were again strongly criticized by opposition supporters, because of their agreement to minimum reparation and their haziness on the question of sovereignty over the islands. Thomas Pownall, the former governor of Massachusetts Bay, made an especially long, critical speech which was later published, in which he denounced the ministers' acceptance of the declaration, even hinting at the existence of a secret agreement to abandon the islands when he stated, "this business has been conducted in two different lines of

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[176]Cited in P. D. G. Thomas, *House of Commons*, p. 190.
[177]*Parl. Hist.*, xvi, pp. 1364-1365.
[178]*George III, Correspondence*, ii, King to North, 14 February 1771, p. 218.
[179]*Parl. Hist.*, xvi, pp. 1359-1361.

negociation; the one diplomatic, responsible, upon paper, the other ministerial, irresponsible, on parole..."[180] He could do no more than hint at the existence of such a secret promise because there was no concrete proof for this assertion. He also brought up the ever-present idea that France had interfered in the dispute and the ministers had allowed this. After this, the House divided on the original motion for the Address. The result was 271 for and 157 against.[181]

The events which took place in the House of Lords were much the same; however, the Duke of Newcastle moved that an address be presented to the king and the Duke of Manchester proposed an amendment similar to that which Dowdeswell had presented in the Commons. The amendment was objected to and there was a long debate until the House finally divided upon the question of the amendment, not of the original question. The result of this division was 35 contents, 3 Proxies, total 38. Not contents 92, Proxies 15, total 107. The opposition Lords then took advantage of their prerogative as noblemen and issued a protest to the Address approving the Spanish declaration, in which they stated all of their objections in detail.[182]

The king and the ministers were pleased to have weathered the storm in parliament caused by the Falkland Islands, and George III complimented North on the grounds that "the great majority yesterday is very creditable for administration."[183] Though this may have been true, in fact, the opposition must have been gratified to have had such a large number of adherents in such full Houses. As Mrs. Harris wrote to her son James, the British representative in Madrid, "the House sat till past three in the morning, when they divided: for the motion 275 [sic], against it 157. I own the minority was more than I expected."[184] Though the opposition did not win any of the divisions over the Falkland Islands dispute, they did make a very respectable showing in both Houses at the height of the debate.

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[180] *Parl. Hist.*, xvi, p. 1375.
[181] *Parl. Hist.*, xvi, p. 1377.
[182] *Parl. Hist.*, xvi, pp. 1380-1385.
[183] *George III, Correspondence*, ii, King to North, 14 February 1771, p. 218.
[184] *Malmesbury Letters*, i, Mrs. Harris to James Harris, 14 February 1771, p. 215.

The momentum created by the declaration and the call of the Houses in order to debate the issue was soon dissipated and the opposition campaign faded away. There was a revival of interest in the Spanish convention when it appeared that Charles III had failed to ratify the agreement and that the Spanish ambassador had been recalled; however, this was not enough to give the opposition the focal point which it needed.[115] Indeed, the settlement of the dispute was a welcome relief from the tension both in Spain and England caused by the fear of a war. Harris wrote to Lord Rochford that the agreement had caused celebration among the Spanish people and that they were all satisfied, except those, such as the Count of Aranda, who had hoped to profit from a war.[116] In England, Mr. Harris wrote that

> the accommodation with Spain is generally well received in this country, which is well affected to Spain, and does not wish a war, whatever wicked patriots may endeavour, or lying newspapers print. None make such audacious use of the word people as these do, a word which often means no more than themselves and their ignorant or interested followers.[117]

The final attempt by an opposition member to use the Falkland Islands dispute to discredit the government came on 5 March 1771, when Governor Pownall made a motion in the Commons stating that the sovereignty clause in the agreement had damaged British possessions in America. There was a debate on the motion in a rather thin House and a division of 43 yeas and 130 noes, so it passed in the negative.[118] This motion was held in such contempt by the administration that nobody bothered to argue against it. They simply voted it down. George III expressed the government's sentiments about this attempt when he wrote to North, stating, "I am not surprised that Mr. Pownall's absurd motion could not produce a very long debate; indeed it is a convincing proof that the author of it is not calculated to make a figure in foreign affairs."[119] By this time, it had become apparent that the issues raised by the Falkland Islands dispute were no longer very popular and to belabor the point was no longer a wise political tactic. It was generally conceded, as Walpole stated, that

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[115] *Chatham Correspondence*, iv, Calcraft to Chatham, 21 February 1771, p. 103, and *Walpole Correspondence*, xxiii, Walpole to Mann, 22 February 1771, p. 269.
[116] *Malmesbury Diaries*, i, Harris to Rochford, 9 February 1771, p. 75.
[117] *Malmesbury Letters*, Mr. Harris to James Harris, 5 March 1771, p. 218.
[118] *Parl. Hist.*, xvi, p. 1402.
[119] *George III, Correpondence*, ii, King to North, 5 March 1771, p. 223.

"though the opposition affected to decry our acquiescence, the humiliation certainly fell on the King of Spain, who yielded a flower of his crown..."[190]

The Falkland Islands dispute had provided the opposition with what its leaders thought was a golden opportunity to try to unseat the North ministry because it was an issue which interested everyone and which could serve to unite the disparate opposition parties. This was also a good chance for the opposition to gain power because foreign policy errors were the one thing which parliament would not tolerate and which could cause the independent members to swing over to the opposition's side, as occurred to the ministries of Walpole in 1742 and would do so again to Lord North in 1782. Even though there was a concerted attempt by the opposition members to work together in a coordinated, systematic fashion, North's ministry, because of its large parliamentary majorities and wise use of procedural tactics to avoid embarrassing divisions, was able to resist each attack and the opposition campaign faltered and stumbled to a halt.

[190]Walpole, *Memoirs*, iv, p. 177.

III. THE PRESS AND POLITICS

Any examination of the Falkland Islands Crisis and British politics must necessarily include a discussion of the issue as it appeared in contemporary newspapers, an important, but generally untapped, historical source. The Falkland Islands were leading news items for the latter part of 1770 and the beginning of 1771, and this helped to focus the attention of the nation on the state of the delicate negotiations between Spain and England. The various papers published many reports and opinions on different aspects of the crisis, and an analysis of what was published, and where and when it was published, can help to answer some pertinent questions about the nature of eighteenth century British politics and society. The newspapers referred to the crisis in many different ways, using various angles from which to report on it, and these references can be categorized so that they are manageable and more easily analysed. The references to the crisis rarely existed in the form of editorial comments or in articles, but usually as letters to the editor, international correspondence, reports of debates in parliament and simple rumour or speculation. The topics of interest were the progress of diplomatic negotiations concerning the Falkland Islands; the state of the nation's navy as compared to Spain's preparations for hostilities; the effects of the crisis on British politics, trade and society; and, of course, the main issue of concern, whether or not there would actually be a war. As the papers often printed speculation, rumour, and the unsubstantiated opinions of various correspondents, a comparison of the press coverage with the actual diplomacy and politics of the crisis is needed in order to see if journals were reporting events with any degree of accuracy. Once it is established when the press was reporting facts as opposed to rumours, these references can be further examined in order to determine what kind of effects they had on the development of the crisis; whether or not the press was recognized as an important tool in shaping public opinion, or if it simply reflected public opinion; and whether or not politicians were concerned with extra-parliamentary opinions in this particular case. If it can be established that the newspapers did have an effect on the development of British policy during the Falkland Islands dispute, it is then natural to question the origins of the press reports. Did various political parties attempt to use the press

in order to promote their particular views, and if so, did they use only certain newspapers, and was this use of the press influential in shaping Britain's response to the crisis?

First of all, it must be determined whether or not the newspapers did have some kind of impact on the "political nation." This term itself is ambiguous, as recent research has shown that certain journals sold small numbers, but it is known that readership was much greater than simple circulation figures indicate. John Brewer put the case well, when he commented:

> even if we are to concede that there were some contemporaries, as there indubitably were, who disparagingly referred to the ignorant and illiterate populace, we are still left with the problem of explaining why so many politicians and pamphleteers spoke of such an all-embracing 'political nation'.[191]

The sheer volume of references to the Falkland Islands dispute is an indication that the public was interested in the crisis and that this topic could sell newspapers, which was, after all, the prime concern of the publishers. The Falkland Islands dispute was certainly well publicized in the newspapers, to a point that raises the question of how much influence the press had upon public opinion and whether or not the latter had any influence on the development of foreign policy. In this instance it appears that the press was used in a limited way as a political tool, usually by the opposition rather than the ministry; which in turn indicates that the government was not as concerned with controlling the newspapers and did not consider the press to be an important influence in "circles where decisions were taken."[192] Nevertheless the press in Britain is thought to have had a great deal of influence on the formulation of policy in an indirect way. Paul Langford has argued that one of the basic facts about politics in Britain was the power of public opinion: "it was one of the distinguishing features of British foreign policy in the period that neither the crown nor its servants nor parliament could make even relatively small decisions without taking into account the wishes of those they ruled."[193] One of the manifestations of this powerful public opinion was "the very great influence of the press."[194] It was commonly held in 1770, and is still accepted today by most historians, that

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[191]John Brewer, *Party Ideology At The Accession Of George III*, (Cambridge: 1976), p. 141.
[192]Jeremy Black, *History Today*. p. 36.
[193]Paul Langford, p. 15.
[194]Paul Langford, p. 11.

public opinion could alter the course of foreign policy. Horace Walpole wrote that the wishes of the people were so influential that "whatever the Ministers thought or whatever they proposed to bear, it was not openly that they dared to talk any language but war, or at least resentment."[195] This notion was not only true of English scholars studying this episode, but also of historians such as Hidalgo Nieto who wrote that the opinion against Spain was such that war was almost inevitable, and Julius Goebel, who stated that "only extreme measures would silence popular clamor."[196] That public opinion was of considerable importance to the formulation of foreign policy was a notion to which the eighteenth century opposition certainly ascribed. Perhaps this was simply wishful thinking, but it did not stop the Marquis of Rockingham, for example, from expressing the idea that the public had some kind of influence when he wrote "that suffering the blame to spread for some days will have effect on the public."[197] The importance of the press in helping to educate and shape this public opinion can best be illustrated by the information which the ministry went out of its way to keep out of the newspapers. For example, when the government was attempting to deal with the news of the initial confrontations at the Falkland Islands in June 1770, it was reported that;

> The ministry wish to keep this secret from the people however, it is hoped, through the channel of every paper, this transaction may not be hid;[198]

Though it is extremely difficult to quantify the influence which the press may have had upon the formation of foreign policy in eighteenth century England, it is an inescapable fact that the press was very energetic in its coverage of the Falkland Islands dispute and that this must have had some influence on the readership. It is also undeniable that even with large parliamentary majorities, no eighteenth century ministry could afford to ignore the desires of the public completely.

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[195]Walpole, *Memoirs*, iv, p. 114.
[196]Julius Goebel, p. 294 and Manuel Hidalgo Nieto, *La cuestion de las Malvinas. Contribucion al estudio de las relaciones hispano-inglesas en el siglo XVIII*, (Madrid: 1947), p. 207. "*En el Parlamento y en la calle crecia la opinion contra Espana, y la guerra se juzgaba casi inevitable.*"
[197]*Chatham Correspondence*, iv, 26 November 1770, Rockingham to Chatham, p.29.
[198]*Bingley's*, #3, 23 June 1770.

The earliest mention of the problems brewing between England and Spain which actually led up to the events on the Falkland Islands falls into the category of rumours from abroad, published in *Lloyds Evening Post* in March 1770, when it was reported, alternatively, that Spain was fortifying her American colonies in anticipation of a war with England, that Jamaica had been taken by Spain and that Spain had designs on Gibraltar.[199] Though these rumours were quickly disproven, there was increasing talk of war between the two nations throughout the summer of 1770, but this was not based on any precise knowledge of what had occurred on 10 June 1770 at Port Egmont. Rather, these reports mention conflicts stemming from Spanish seizure of British vessels and tension in the West Indian colonies.[200] When Captain Hunt arrived at Plymouth in the *Tamer* on 2 June 1770, he attempted to be very discreet, about the message he brought from the Falkland Islands; however, some suspicions must have been raised because by mid-June it was

> rumoured, that in the journals of the Tamer sloop of war, lately arrived from Port Egmont, some proceedings of the Spanish Commander are mentioned, which the M__y have thought proper to conceal for the present.[201]

By 21 June the papers were discussing the Falkland Islands but the facts were still not known, though it was asserted in *Bingley's Weekly Journal* that the "Spaniards have now insulted us and they were allowed to do it with impunity."[202] Nevertheless, there was still some confusion as to what was really going on in the South Seas. In the same edition of *Bingley's Journal* there was an article about the value of the Falkland Islands to the British Empire, describing them as the "key to the South Seas"; and another statement that the ministry had decided simply to hand the islands over to the Spanish, with the further comment that "it is a certain fact that Falkland Island is in the possession of the Spaniards."[203] This example is illustrative of the fact that the papers were willing to print almost any opinions on the topic, even if they contradicted each other. The *Middlesex Journal* confirmed the fact that the Falkland Islands

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[199] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 26-28 March 1770, 30 March-2 April 1770, 18-20 April 1770.
[200] *Middlesex Journal*, 14-16 June 1770 and 10-12 July 1770.
[201] *Middlesex Journal*, 12-14 June 1770.
[202] *Bingley's Weekly Journal*, #3, 23 June 1770.
[203] *Bingley's Weekly Journal*, #3, 23 June 1770.

had been taken by the Spanish on 30 June, while *Bingley's* was at the same time refuting this previously printed statement.[204] From the time that Hunt arrived in England, therefore, until the *Favourite* arrived on 22 September 1770, the newspapers were filled with speculative references as to what the Spaniards were planning to do on the Falklands, and how the British ministry was going to react. These references focussed primarily upon Spanish aggression and naval preparations, although one of the rumours claimed a war was so probable that England's ambassadors to France and Spain had solicited letters of recall.[205] As the British government had been advised by its charge d'affairs at Madrid, James Harris,[206] on 23 August, and by Masserano on 10 September 1770, of the details of Madariaga's expedition to Port Egmont, it appears that the government was very adept at keeping the actual facts about this matter out of the newspapers. Though there were suspicions and speculation, it was not until the *Favourite* had docked that any concrete information about the Falkland Islands dispute was leaked to the press. A few days after the arrival of the ship, a letter, ostensibly from the Admiralty, was sent to *Lloyd's Coffee House*, advising the public in detail of the Spanish dispossession of the British garrison at Port Egmont and this letter was thereafter published in the journals.[207] The report from the *Middlesex Journal* was remarkably accurate in its contention that the "Spanish ambassador pretends the officer at Falkland island has done what has happened of his own head, and that his Court know not a tittle about it." Prince Masserano had indeed been instructed to disclaim the action by his court; however, Spain was not disavowing the "officer at Falkland Island" but, rather, the governor of Buenos Aires, Bucareli, who had given Madariaga his orders.

After it was established that there had been some kind of conflict at Port Egmont, the newspaper reports concentrated on whether or not England would go to war over this insult, and so the diplomatic negotiations between the two countries became the focus of attention,

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[204] *Middlesex Journal*, 28-30 June 1770 and *Binkley's Weekly Journal*, #4, 30 June 1770.
[205] *Middlesex Journal*, 18-20 September 1770.
[206] *Calendar of Home Office Papers*,
[207] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 24-26 September 1770 and *Middlesex Journal*, 25-27 September 1770.

although there was still a good deal of interest in naval and military preparations. The main issue of controversy, however, seems to have been the same point that was brought up in parliament by the opposition; that is, the question of whether Britain should waste precious time negotiating a settlement, thereby giving Spain time to rearm, or whether Britain should simply assume that Spain's actions constituted an act of war and respond accordingly. These contentions had many adherents on either side, as there were advantages and disadvantages to both courses of action. The dilemma in which the North ministry found itself in this case was reiterated in the press as the opinions of various interested groups were published. Even once it was realized that the two nations were trying to negotiate a settlement, the fear that these talks would fail and that a war was probable became evident. As early as September, the rumour that the Pursuivants of Arms at the Herald's Office had been told to be "within an hour's warning" was automatically interpreted as an indication of impending hostilities.[208] What is surprising is that the ministry was able to keep the negotiations between the courts a secret from 10 September, when they began, to 26 September, when references to the diplomacy began to appear.[209]

Once the facts about the dispossession of the British on the Falkland Islands were made public, and it was realized that the ministry had opted to attempt to negotiate a settlement rather than to involve the nation in a war, the progress of the negotiations became all-important. Accordingly therefore, whenever it appeared as if the negotiations were failing, or that the Spaniards were simply using these in order to gain time to complete their military preparations, the ministry was immediately attacked and accused of cowardice and incompetence. These attacks on the ministry were illustrated in the press at the end of October when an article appeared discussing the fortification of Hispaniola by the Spanish. Another article was also printed which discussed the disgraceful state of the British navy and its inability to defend the empire.[210] A similar sentiment was expressed at the end of

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[208] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 26-28 September 1770.
[209] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 24-26 September 1770 and *Middlesex Journal*, 25-27 September 1770.
[210] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 31 October-2 November 1770 and *Middlesex Journal*, 27-30 October 1770.

November when Weymouth had almost despaired of settling the dispute in an amicable manner. At that time, the ministry was chastized for having lowered itself to treating with Spain:

> As the Spaniards have insulted England, what is called the *Ultima*, ought in this case, to have been the *Prima Ratio Britanniae*.[211]

A comparison of the newspaper reports about the negotiations with the actual diplomacy will enable an analysis of the quality of the reporting on this issue to be made. According to eighteenth century sources, the first message to Spain listing any of Britain's demands was sent by Weymouth to Harris on 12 September 1770 and received by the latter on 24 September, and was a demand that the Spanish restore the Falkland Islands to the British.[212] Weymouth wrote Harris again on 14 September, asking to be kept will informed of any new developments in Madrid. *Lloyd's Evening Post* reported accurately enough, though a little late, on 28 September that a messenger had been sent to Madrid.[213] However, the report discussed particulars of the message's contents which were pure fabrication. For instance, it states that this was a form of ultimatum and that

> if he is put off with shuffling, evasive answers, (as is thought will be the case,) the express is to return immediately and a British fleet will easily assert the British rights. The gentleman, it is said, had orders to wait only nine hours for an answer from the Spanish Court, and then to set out on his return, even though he should not be furnished with any in that time.

This assertion is ridiculous in light of the fact that Harris did not even see Grimaldi in order to discuss the contents of Weymouth's letter until a day after it arrived in Madrid, on 24 September, and that he did not convey the content of the interview to Weymouth until 28 September. In the press, the time until the return messenger arrived in London, on 8 October 1770, was spent in speculation about the probability of a war, and in trying to figure out precisely when the message should arrive, considering the distance to Madrid and travelling time.[214] The Falkland Islands dispute was also kept in the public mind by the printing of

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[211] *Middlesex Journal*, 29 November-1 December 1770.
[212] The chronological sequence of the negotiations for the subsequent discussion is based on Julius Goebel, *The Struggle For the Falkland Islands*, pp. 283-360 and Manuel Hidalgo Nieto, *La Cuestion de las Malvinas*, pp. 199-219.
[213] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 26-28 September 1770.
[214] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 3-5 October 1770 and *Middlesex Journal*, 4-6 October 1770.

gossip about the diplomats concerned, such as the discussion of Masserano's wealth which was printed in the *Middlesex Journal*.[215]

The newspapers were aware that a messenger had arrived on 8 October 1770; however, they were not able to report accurately on the contents of the dispatches he brought. Perhaps in an attempt to force the ministry to disclose the actual contents of the message, it was printed that the "Ministry have promised that the news brought by the Courier from Spain shall be notified to the Lord Mayor of London, and the public, as soon as possible."[216] If that was the case, it did not work because the public was not given the details of Spain's response. When the *Middlesex Journal* reported on 9 October that Mr. Potter, the messenger from Madrid, had actually arrived, it also discussed the different possibilities for the kind of answer which he brought. However, that journal pointed out "that nothing has yet transpired that can be authenticated, nor can any credit be given to any of the rumours above recited."[217] By 10 October 1770, it was thought that the answer was generally a favourable one in which the Catholic Monarch protested his unending friendship for Britain and his desire to settle the matter peacefully.[218] This was accurate enough, but in fact, Masserano's answer was unacceptable to Britain because at his meeting with Weymouth, he suggested that the two powers negotiate a convention, which in itself was not agreeable with what George III and his ministers had in mind. Notwithstanding this aspect of the interview, Masserano suggested that Charles III must in all good conscience acknowledge Bucareli's general orders, though the Spaniards were more than willing to restore Port Egmont as long as this could be done without prejudice to that crown's prior claims of sovereignty. Aside from these details, Masserano stated that the Catholic Monarch's honour had been stained by Captain Hunt's threats to Ruiz Puentes, the governor of Puerto Soledad, and that Hunt's actions therefore should be disavowed by George III.

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[215] *Middlesex Journal*, 4-6 October 1770. "The Spanish Ambassador, Prince Masserano, is said to be the richest foreign Minister now at the British Courts, the revenue of his estates amounting to 120,000 crowns per annum, besides his appointment of 40,000 crowns per annum, as Ambassador."
[216] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 5-8 October 1770.
[217] *Middlesex Journal*, 6-9 October 1770.
[218] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 8-10 October 1770.

On 11 October an odd letter was published in the *Middlesex Journal*, stating that for some reason someone was withholding information about the negotiations and that this was being done because "it would be time enough for the public to be acquainted with these matters, when their money is wanted." This was, again, perhaps a ploy to try to force the ministry to disclose more of the details of the negotiations, because in the same issue there was a report that Potter had indeed arrived from Madrid, and that "great arts have been used within these two or three days, by certain persons for interested purposes, to conceal his arrival." The paper further reported that Potter brought no decisive answer from Spain.[219] In light of this, which was a fair assessment of Spain's actual response, the *Middlesex Journal* added that another messenger was setting out that day for Madrid and, beyond this, that a fleet of seven sail of the line were destined to retake possession of Port Egmont. This last statement was reprinted the next day in *Lloyd's Evening Post*.[220] It is not likely that a messenger was sent to Madrid as early as the *Middlesex Journal* reports because Weymouth did not convey the British ministry's response to Masserano's suggestion of signing a convention until 16 October 1770. Masserano said that he could not reply to Weymouth's refusal to consider a convention without applying to Madrid for instructions. This fact was reported in *Lloyd's Evening Post* on 12 October, which again was a premature assumption because Weymouth and Masserano did not reach an impasse until 16 October 1770.[221] The second rumour, concerning the fleet which was supposedly sailing to reclaim Port Egmont, was patently false, even though that was not reported until November.[222] However, this was a manifestation of the rising tension among the public which mirrored the actual feelings of the negotiators, as Weymouth refused to countenance Masserano's proposals. There existed a sentiment that England was on the verge of a war, and as the fears created by this notion increased, so did the number of wild rumours flying about, and so did their ability to deceive and disturb.[223] This fact was recognized by some and an attempt was made to diffuse the

[219] *Middlesex Journal*, 9-11 October 1770.
[220] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 10-12 October 1770.
[221] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 10-12 October 1770.
[222] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 14-16 November 1770.
[223] *Middlesex Journal*, 11-13 October 1770.

effect of these rumours by pointing out the origins of one of them:

> Last night a person, properly equipped, with dirty boots, etc, rode through the City towards St. James's, and presently afterwards a report was spread that pacific proposals of a very agreeable nature, were received from the Court of Spain.[224]

Many of the rumours focussed upon Spanish preparations. It was printed, for example, that blank commissions were ready and waiting so that privateers could be hired by Spain as soon as war was declared, or, in another case, a story was printed that the Spaniards were actively soliciting allies among the North American Indians whose territories bordered the British colonies.[225] One such report must have gone so far as to say that war actually had been declared and Masserano had been recalled, because this story was later refuted in one of the papers.[226]

Throughout the rest of October various reports were printed declaring that war was all but inevitable, that peace was likely, that the French were intervening in the dispute, and other bits of speculation about what was likely to happen. Weymouth had written to Harris on 17 October 1770 informing him of what the British court considered to be minimum reparation for the insult it had suffered; this was a disavowal of Bucareli and restoration of Port Egmont, and Harris was instructed to show this letter to Grimaldi that he might completely understand the situation. However, the press reported that the terms of the negotiations were far more extensive than they really were. For instance, the idea that Spain should "make a pecuniary atonement for the expenses the British government have been at in consequence of their dispossessing the English of that island," was completely original and had never been mentioned in the actual negotiations.[227] Furthermore, it was reported that the ministry was negotiating for "the rendering satisfaction to the owners of the Antigallican privateer, for detaining her and her prize, the Duke de Penthieure, at Cadiz," as well as settling the Manila Ransom and reimbursement for the cost of British armaments.[228] As the newspapers continued to seek angles from which to report on negotiations which were in a

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[224] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 10-12 October 1770.
[225] *Middlesex Journal*, 13-16 October 1770.
[226] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 15-17 October 1770.
[227] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 17-19 October 1770.
[228] *Middlesex Journal*, 20-23 October 1770.

state of suspense for the moment, they printed other stories that were far from the truth. These included the role of France and her interference in the negotiations, and even the idea that the whole contretemps had not actually been caused by the Falkland Islands dispute at all.[229] It was claimed that the entire crisis had been blown out of proportion and that the Southern Secretary of State was not treating the Falkland Islands business with any degree of concern.[230] The next issue of the *Middlesex Journal* went even further to say that the war preparations which had been such a cause for concern "have not been made *solely* on account of the affair of Falklands Island, but owe their origin to some private intelligence received by the ministry, relative to the dreadful fire at Portsmouth."[231] Though it was true that there had been a fire at the docks of Portsmouth and the press had tried to link the origins of the conflagaration to Spanish sympathizers, there was never mention of these suspicions, nor any accusations, made by the British ministry in its domestic or diplomatic correspondence. The rumour that the island was to be neutralized was also false, but at least it had some basis in fact, as this idea was actually proposed in the context of the negotiation even though it was rejected by the British court.[232]

By the end of October the rumours of war eased, though it was reported that a former premier, perhaps Chatham or Grafton, had said publicly that he thought war was inevitable.[233] Notwithstanding that report, the papers were generally optimistic by the end of the month. This sentiment was strengthened by the notion that the French were refusing to back the Spaniards and that Charles III was being forced to accommodate Britain's demands because of this.[234] This was not quite an accurate interpretation of what had actually occurred because though Choiseul had indicated that the French would prefer a peaceful settlement of the dispute at that particular time, he claimed that they would nonetheless back the Spanish court's actions either way. All that Choiseul asked was that a decision be made as soon as

[229] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 17-19 October 1770 and *Middlesex Journal*, 23-25 October 1770.
[230] *Middlesex Journal*, 20-23 October 1770.
[231] *Middlesex Journal*, 23-25 October 1770.
[232] *Middlesex Journal*, 20-23 October 1770.
[233] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 29-31 October 1770.
[234] *Middlesex Journal*, 27-30 October 1770.

possible.[235] The general feeling of optimism was expressed in reports claiming that the negotiations were terminated and that all had been settled to the advantage of Britain:

> The Ministry are now said to be so sure of a peace, that congratulatory cards have been sent on the occasion to divers of their friends both in and out of London.[236]

The source of this rumour is a mystery, as it is difficult to understand why the ministry should have been so optimistic when even the newspapers were knowledgeable enough to print that the government had not yet received a response from Madrid. *Lloyd's Evening Post* reported that a new message was expected on 8 November 1770.[237] However, this was not the case, as the response from Harris to Weymouth was not even sent until 7 November 1770, and was not received in London until 19 November.

For some inexplicable reason there were very few reports of consequence relevant to the Falkland Islands in any of the newspapers during the first week of November, perhaps because everyone was awaiting the answer from Madrid. During the rest of the month, however, the reports again became more pessimistic and the fear of the probability of war being declared increased towards the end of November. These reports again contained descriptions of Spanish naval preparations and speculations about where the first Spanish blow was most likely to fall; but also the notion that Spain was simply using the negotiations as a delaying tactic until she was fully prepared to fight.[238] The discussion of aggressive Spanish behaviour, such as the *guarda costas*' insistence on searching any vessels they found cruising off Hispaniola, was generally directed against the ministry, criticising its decision to negotiate as a sign of weakness and inactivity.[239] There were also further references to the fleet which had ostensibly sailed to retake the Falkland Islands; however, this rumour was reported to be false on 27 November.[240]

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[235]Julius Goebel, pp. 291-294.
[236]*Lloyd's Evening Post*, 29-31 October 1770 and *Middlesex Journal*, 27-30 October 1770.
[237]*Lloyd's Evening Post*, 26-29 October 1770.
[238]*Middlesex Journal*, 8-10 November 1770, *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 12-14 November and 16-19 November 1770, *Middlesex Journal*, 17-20 November 1770 and 20-22 November 1770.
[239]*Gazateer*, 22 November 1770 and 17 November 1770.
[240]*Middlesex Journal*, 15-17 November 1770, *Gazateer*, 22 November 1770 and *Middlesex Journal*, 24-27 November 1770.

The message which Weymouth received from Harris on 19 November 1770 stated in essence, that Spain would agree to all of Britain's demands, however, only upon the condition that George III should disavow Hunt's menaces. Weymouth wrote to Harris on 23 November 1770 stating that this condition was completely unacceptable and that Harris should advise the English consul at Cadiz and the governor of Gibraltar of the unfavourable situation and keep them informed. The earlier newspaper reports about the contents of the dispatches were accurate in their description of Spain's willingness to accommodate Britain's demands, however they did not mention the crucial stumbling block of the Spanish demand that George III disavow the actions of Captain Hunt.[241] It was quickly recognized that the new message from Madrid did not bring an accommodation, nor any formal declaration of war, but it was reported that Spain and the Spanish ambassador were again simply stalling for time.[242] As the situation worsened it was conjectured that the Spanish ambassador would be leaving England within the week.[243] At this point, however, a divergence appears in the reports from the press about the contents of a new and "final requisition" sent to Madrid by the ministry. While the newspapers printed that this was the last chance for Madrid to accommodate Britain's demands, Lord Weymouth had, in fact, already despaired of that possible outcome.[244] In his letter to Harris of 28 November 1770, he instructed him to advise all the British consuls at Spanish ports and the governor of Gibraltar secretly about the imminent rupture between the two nations. By 1 December 1770, the press had bridged this disparity between its reports and reality and was again printing accurate copy on the state of the negotiations. There was, as the *Middlesex Journal* pointed out, disagreement within the cabinet as to how the ministry should proceed.[245] The negotiations, as far as Weymouth was concerned, had reached an impasse and the newspapers were again printing reports that war was imminent and that the

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[241] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 19-21 November 1770 and *Public Advertiser*, 22 November 1770.
[242] *Gazateer*, 23 November 1770, *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 23-26 November 1770, and *Gazateer*, 26 November 1770.
[243] *Gazateer*, 26 November 1770.
[244] *Middlesex Journal*, 24-27 November 1770 and *Gazateer*, 27 November 1770.
[245] *Middlesex Journal*, 29 November-1 December 1770.

Spanish ambassador was leaving the country.[246] Within the diplomatic correspondence and the newspaper reports, therefore, there existed a strong sentiment that a war was very likely to occur. As the fear of war became more pronounced, all the old rumours were once again dragged out. The *Public Advertiser* printed a report that all of the ports in Spain were under military and naval preparation, adding the next day, however, that the "report of the Herald having received orders to be in readiness to declare war, is *without foundation*."[247] There were also reports that Spain had offered new terms of accommodation which Weymouth insisted on rejecting.[248]

It was about this time, in early December, that the secretary to the French ambassador, Frances, was instructed by Choiseul, who now was actively seeking a peaceful outcome to the dispute, to bypass Weymouth completely and suggest a new project directly to Lord North. The general perception in all the nations involved was that Weymouth's intransigence was impeding the peaceful conclusion of this dispute. It may be for this reason that suddenly, at the beginning of December, the newspapers started printing reports that there would not likely be a declaration of war in the near future and that the Spanish ambassador was not leaving England.[249] It was also at this time that the *Gazateer* printed a report, supposedly from Lord North, stating that

> He has the real interest of his country so much at heart, as rather than involve it in a war at any rate at present, to risque his head that the negotiations now on foot will turn out to the satisfaction of the people in general.[250]

During this period the cabinet was so divided in opinion that it had almost ceased to deal with the Falkland negotiations and had adopted a wait and see attitude, hoping that Spain would make some kind of decisive move. There was also at this time some intrigue occurring within the cabinet, as a result of which Weymouth was eased out of office as secretary of state for the Southern Department and replaced by Lord Rochford. There was a good deal of

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[246] *Middlesex Journal*, 29 November-1 December1770 and *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 30 November-3 December 1770.
[247] *Public Advertiser*, 3 December and 4 December 1770.
[248] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 3-5 December 1770 and *Public Advertiser*, 6 December 1770.
[249] *Gazateer*, 5 December 1770 and *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 5-7 December 1770.
[250] *Gazateer*, 7 December 1770.

speculation as to why Weymouth resigned (this occurrence is discussed in greater detail below); however, the newspapers had no more information to offer than that he had resigned the seals on 18 December 1770 and that he appeared to have done so with good humour and showed no evidence of rancour towards the administration.[251] Prior to Weymouth's resignation, the press did not report anything of consequence about the Falkland negotiations, which is surprising because it was at that time that Frances started meeting directly with North. As the official negotiations appeared to be at a standstill, however, these unofficial talks should have stimulated some kind of comment had they been made known to the public. This is, therefore, another instance where the government seems to have very effectively kept its business a secret, although the press did report on a meeting between the French and Spanish ambassadors.[252] It is rather strange that the press did not discover and report upon the dispute within the cabinet caused by Weymouth's desire to put an end to what he saw as pointless procrastination by recalling Harris. This issue was discussed on 5 December by the cabinet, and the idea was rejected. From 15 December on, North and Frances held several meetings, trying desperately to reach some kind of an accord. For some reason, the *Middlesex Journal* reported on 15 December that Lord North had opted for war, and on the same day reports were printed of the preparations made by the Spanish to attack various British territories.[253] It can be assumed that many people thought that when Weymouth resigned on 18 December, the way would be cleared for a peaceful solution to the dispute, and on 19 December there was a report that the Spaniards were willing to go along with British demands and the publication of a letter in which the author pleaded that the nation not go to war over the Falkland Islands.[254] The *Public Advertiser* also published a report on 19 December suggesting that the Spanish ambassador had complained about the continued British naval preparations, but that he had been put off by the ministry.

On 21 December 1770, Rochford, who had now replaced Weymouth in the Southern secretaryship, took the unexpected initiative and wrote to Harris, ordering him to withdraw

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[251] *Public Advertiser*, 18 December 1770 and *Gazateer*, 19 December 1770.
[252] *Middlesex Journal*, 4-6 December 1770.
[253] *Middlesex Journal*, 13-15 December 1770 and *Public Advertiser*, 15 December 1770.
[254] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 17-19 December 1770.

from Spain and return to England. This led to the breaking point in the negotiations and could well have caused Spain to declare war. During the weeks that followed, the tension and fear of the outbreak of war reached a climax within the British court. However, though it was mentioned in the press that "the Spanish Ambassador has had very high words within these few days with Lord Rochford," this could not have been caused by Masserano's knowledge of Harris's recall, as he was not informed of this drastic move until 3 January 1771.[255] The newspapers did not discuss Harris's recall at all until the middle of January 1771, so this again was a closely guarded secret. Press discussion of the Falkland Islands crisis during the last week of December focussed upon speculation about Weymouth's resignation.[256]

Another event which occurred near the end of December served to complicate the balance of affairs between Spain and England. This was the dismissal and disgrace of the duc de Choiseul by Louis XV on 24 December 1770. This change was of dramatic importance to Spain's ability to count on French assistance during a war against England. Choiseul had been the main proponent of the Family Compact and immediately after his dismissal, Louis XV wrote to Charles III personally, explaining to him that France was averse to fighting a war at that time. By 1 January 1771, the press had picked up upon this point and was reporting that the Spanish ambassador had refused to say anything until he received fresh instructions from Madrid, though English hopes for peace ran high. It was reported that

> instead of war being declared by Spain against us, it is now thought she will submit to the propositions of our Ministry, and make any concession they may be willing to request.[257]

It was also acknowledged that a letter recalling Harris had been forwarded "with fresh directions for Mr. Harris's conduct; in consequence of the change in the affairs of France."[258] This was an inaccurate report because, in fact, Harris's new instructions were not sent until 18 January 1771.[259]

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[255]*Public Advertiser*, 22 December 1770 and *Gazateer*, 22 December 1770.
[256]*Gazateer*, 24 December 1770, *Public Advertiser*, 26 and 28 December 1770 and *Bingley's*, 29 December 1770.
[257]*General Evening Post*, 1 January 1771.
[258]*General Evening Post*, 1 January 1771.
[259]Julius Goebel, p. 358.

The first few weeks of January were again a time of incertitude, as Choiseul's fall created a feeling that the dispute would be concluded in a peaceful manner, with the counterbalancing reports that Spain had designs on Gibraltar and Ireland, and that England had presented Spain with an ultimatum which could easily result in war.[260] One of the reports, attempting to present a balanced view, stated that "all therefore that we can be certain of is, that we are at present suffering great inconveniences, and in much danger of experiencing many more."[261] It was later reported that the cabinet had deliberated about the question and had finally decided for peace.[262] This was certainly a premature report, as Grimaldi's new instructions to Masserano were not even sent from Madrid until 7 January 1771. On 8 January 1771, the *General Evening Post* printed a report that the negotiations had been settled successfully, although this had occurred because of some "other secret requisitions made on the part of some old claims." During the following days of January, which were filled with tension for the negotiators as they awaited a response from Madrid, optimistic reports appeared about Spain's acquiescence, although it was recognized by 12 January that a conclusive decision had yet to be made.[263]

On 17 January it was reported, inaccurately, that Grimaldi had been dismissed because he had advocated peace and that Charles III was determined to fight a war.[264] There was then a report that the Spanish ambassador had quit the British Court at St. James and that a squadron was being readied to go and commit an act of reprisal against Spain.[265] There were also stories about how Spain was "in hourly expectation of a war with England," and that Spanish ships were ordered to remain in port unless they travelled in convoys.[266] This new barrage of war scares was completely contrary to the direction of the negotiations because by

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[260] *Middlesex Journal*, 1-3 January 1771 and 5-8 January 1771 and *Public Advertiser*, 8 January 1771 and 9 January 1771.
[261] *General Evening Post*, 3-5 January 1771.
[262] *General Evening Post*, 8-10 January 1771 and *Middlesex Journal*, 8-10 January 1771.
[263] *General Evening Post*, 10-12 January 1771 and *Middlesex Journal*, 10-12 January 1771.
[264] *Middlesex Journal*, 15-17 January 1771.
[265] *General Evening Post*, 15-17 January 1771 and 17-19 January 1771.
[266] *Middlesex Journal*, 19-22 January 1771.

this time Rochford had established that an agreement was within reach; to the extent that he had written to Spain on 18 January 1771, ordering Harris to return to Madrid. Rochford and Masserano signed the documents which ended the official international Falkland Islands dispute on 22 January 1771. The earliest press release of this news was the *General Evening Post's* report on 22 January, stating that "the convention between England and Spain was this day, about two o'clock, signed by Lord Rochford and the Spanish Ambassador."[267] Following that date the newspapers all printed copies of the declaration; however, they also all inserted a qualifying statement: "It is generally believed, that by a secret article or promise made to the Spanish ambassador, our Ministers have engaged not to make any future settlement at Port Egmont."[268] The existence of this secret promise and its implications will be discussed in more detail later in this work; however, the fact that this single aspect of the declaration was immediately seized upon and printed by all the newspapers is indicative of the power of the rumour.

The official announcement of the signing was conveyed to the public by way of a letter from Rochford to the Lord-Mayor of London, who then sent copies to the coffee-houses and had it posted at the Royal exchange.[269] There does not appear to have been much general rejoicing because the dispute had finally been settled, possibly due to the persistence of the sentiment that the convention was a dishonourable one, and one which would not serve to preserve the peace for very long. In fact, one report stated that "no measure of administration was ever so generally condemned, as the new convention with Spain."[270] This discontent, may have been caused, however, by the prevalent notion that the convention was an artificial solution to the problem and that another crisis would soon occur which would result in a war.[271] This idea was also reinforced, as time went on, by the fact that the Spanish were showing no signs of disarming, and, in fact, appeared to be stepping up

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[267] *General Evening Post*, 19-22 January 1771.
[268] *London Evening Post*, 22-24 January 1771, *Middlesex Journal*, 24-26 January 1771, *Public Advertiser*, 25 January 1771 and *Bingley's*, 26 January 1771.
[269] *General Evening Post*, 22-24 January 1771, *Middlesex Journal*, 22-24 January 1771 and *Public Advertiser*, 23 January 1771.
[270] *London Evening Post*, 29-31 January 1771.
[271] *Public Advertiser*, 25 January 1771 and *Middlesex Journal*, 22-24 January 1771.

their armament program. It was reported, therefore, that though their protestations were peaceful, in fact, their intentions were hostile.[272] It was also suspected that someone involved in the negotiations had manipulated the outcome of the talks in order to make some profit on the stock market. This perspective was only one among the several anti-ministerial diatribes which were published throughout the end of January and February.[273] Thus, even before actual copies of the declaration were published on 29 January, there were expressions of dissatisfaction with the results of the negotiations and the strong assertion that the Spaniards were not acting in good faith.[274] For example, one paper reported that

> Upon the arrival of the Governor of Buenos Ayres, in Old Spain, the king of Spain immediately appointed him Vice Roy of Upper Navarre; a post of great honour, power, and trust.—Does this look like disapproving of his conduct at Falkland's Islands?[275]

The fact that there was so much discussion in the press about the convention is an indication that there was an interested political nation in what historians used to refer to as the "out-of-doors." The overwhelming majority of the reports in the press were critical of the ministry and unfavourable towards the convention. A cursory survey reveals that of approximately fifty references to the convention, forty were opposed or critical. This raised the question of how seriously the ministry actually took extra-parliamentary opinions and, also, how seriously they took the opposition's point of view within parliament. Certainly the impression given by the press is that the convention was almost universally disapproved. "The convention with Spain instead of affording Pleasure, gives the utmost dissatisfaction to all Ranks of People."[276] There were reports ranging from the extreme view that Masserano had actually been forced to sign the declaration, to the more moderate, yet critical interpretation, that the convention was a letdown because "our Ministers have not obtained from the proud Spaniard one Farthing as a Recompense for this great Loss."[277] Throughout February the

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[272]*General Evening Post*, 22-24 and 26-29 January 1771 and *Middlesex Journal*, 31 January-2 February 1771.
[273]*General Evening Post*, 22-24 January 1771.
[274]See the *General Evening Post*, 26-29 January 1771 and *Middlesex Journal*, 26-29 January 1771 for copies of the declaration.
[275]*Middlesex Journal*, 24-26 January 1771.
[276]*Public Advertiser*, 29 January 1771.
[277]*Public Advertiser*, 1 February 1771, *General Evening Post*, 29-31 January 1771 and

convention was attacked for various reasons, from the fear that the Spaniards were again planning to attack Gibraltar, [277] to the certainty that the ministry had gained an accommodation with Spain only at the expense of promising the future abandonment of the Falkland Islands,[278] and to the belief that French intervention had been the only cause for Spain's seeming willingness to be accommodating.[279] Some of these references merely reported the various points of argument with which the opposition were attacking the convention in parliament, as in the case of the discussion of the declaration's legality which was printed on 7 February 1771 in the *Public Advertiser*. Another of the tactics employed in the press in order to criticize the convention was the attempt to analyze its wording in detail by examining the semantics involved. This was done by authors with wonderful pseudonyms such as 'Pendragon.'[281] Other writers attacked the agreement on the grounds that it was not unconditional because of the clause which discussed the reservation of rights.[282]

The convention was, of course, perceived to be the brain child of the North ministry, and as such, was attacked on purely political grounds because it was a piece of ministerial work. One author went so far as to suggest that the entire crisis had been a propoganda job on the part of the ministry, in order to frighten parliament into voting the supplies, and that once this had been done, the ministers would patch up the convention with Spain in a haphazard manner.[283] Another letter addressed to Lord North introduced the notion of the "double cabinet", to use Edmund Burke's phrase, but said that this did not absolve North from his responsibility. "We very well know you are in Reality only to be looked upon as acting by direction, whatever consequence you may please to assume; but you are not the less

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[277](cont'd) *London Evening Post*, 29-31 January 1771.
[278]*Public Advertiser, 2 February 1771.*
[279]*Public Advertiser*, 5 February 1771 and *Middlesex Journal*, 22-5 and 12-14 February 1771.
[280]*Middlesex Journal*, 5-7 February 1771. For several examples of reports about the Spanish failure to recompense the British, the double-dealing and delaying tactics used by the Spaniards and the idea that the French interferred in the negotiations, see *Public Advertiser*, 5, 8, 15, 27 February and 6 March 1771, *London Evening Post*, 5-7 February 1771 and *Middlesex Journal*, 7-9, 9-12, and 19-21 February 1771.
[281]*Public Advertiser*, 8 February 1771 and *Middlesex Journal*, 2-5 February 1771.
[282]*Public Advertiser*, 13 and 22 February 1771.
[283]*Middlesex Journal*, 12-14 February 1771.

answerable to the Public."[284]

The final aspect of the convention which was discussed in the press was the question of whether or not this document had been ratified by the Spanish monarch. In the latter part of February there appeared reports contending that the Spanish King had refused to ratify the declaration, although further on in the same column of the same journal, there is a report that this story was false.[285] There was again a new report in the *Middlesex Journal* on 23 February 1771 stating that the convention had been ratified, although it was also stated in another paper that "so far from the Court of Spain having readily consented to the ratification of the convention, we are informed, through a channel of very respectable authority, that the greatest difficulties and evasions have been made to the compleating[sic] that business."[286] These reports gave rise to the question of whether or not the Spanish king had indeed ratified the convention, or if he had just expressed his approbation of the declaration. It was finally reported that Charles III had ratified the convention when he issued orders to Don Philip Ruiz Puente, the new governor of Buenos Aires, to restore Port Egmont to the British on 7 February 1771.[287] This order, in reality, did not constitute a ratification under the British constitution because of the nature of the agreement, which was a convention and not a treaty, so there was no need for it to be formally ratified. Obviously, by issuing the order to restore Port Egmont, Charles III was expressing his approval of the convention, as the British government did when it voted an Address of Thanks to George III for the agreement, on 13 February 1771 with a division in the lower house of 271-157.

Although the reports about the convention in the press were overwhelmingly critical of the ministry and the Spanish convention, these were balanced to a degree by a few letters in support of the government's actions. There were actually only five of these, one of which was written by an individual who claimed that from the point of view of commerce, it was to the

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[284] *Public Advertiser*, 29 February 1771. It is interesting to note the existence of the idea that the ministers were responsible not only to the king, but also to the public. These reports also indicate that someone was more than willing to use the convention as a convenient excuse to criticize the government.
[285] *Public Advertiser*, 20 February 1771.
[286] *General Evening Post*, 23-26 February 1771.
[287] *General Evening Post*, 7-9 March 1771 and *Public Advertiser*, 9 March 1771.

advantage of Britain to maintain peace with Spain.[288] Two of the remaining letters were more of an attack against the opposition, "the sanguinary spirit of our *patriots*," than a defense or justification of the ministry.[289]

No extensive polemic developed over the Falkland Islands dispute and the Spanish convention in the British press, even though there were various correspondents who expressed their personal opinions on different aspects of the arguments throughout the crisis. For example, one report contained ideas on how the ministry should react to the Spanish aggression, and included the suggestion "that the junction of the Bourbonian isles in the West Indies, to the British Crown, would be one of the most capital strokes that policy itself could think of."[290] Another correspondent expressed the opinion that Britain should simply have retaken the Islands by force.[291] One of the authors, who signed himself as a "Friend to Both Kingdoms", deplored the notion that England might go to war for such a trifling excuse and he urged that the government consider how little would be gained, and what a great loss would be incurred from a war.[292] In November the *Gazateer* printed three letters, one of which argued that Britain should simply attack Spain, and two of which were of the opinion that war would cause more harm to the nation than could possibly be gained.[293] The former sentiment was later echoed in a letter signed "Friend to this Kingdom" published in the *Public Advertiser*.[294]

One of the papers published a letter in which the author addressed a point brought up by the correspondence criticising the ministry, that is, the reservation of right included in the declaration. The argument printed was that

> such reservation is only mere matter of form, and is never likely to produce the smallest misunderstanding between the two Crowns, especially when they recollect, or may inform themselves, that Spain never, to this hour, has renounced her formal claim of right either to Minorca or Gibraltar...[295]

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[288] *Public Advertiser*, 19 February 1771.
[289] *General Evening Post* 29-31 January 1771 and 21 January-2 February 1771.
[290] *Middlesex Journal*, 15-17 November 1770.
[291] *Public Advertiser*, 3 January 1771.
[292] *Public Advertiser*, 7 November and 23 December 1770.
[293] *Gazateer*, 2, 3 and 10 November 1770.
[294] *Public Advertiser*, 19 November 1770.
[295] *London Evening Post*, 12-14 February 1771.

Aside from this there is one letter criticising Woodfall, the publisher of the *Public Advertiser*, for having printed a pro-ministry letter by an author called Alcides.[296] The rest of the contents of the polemic about this issue are based upon a letter written by Junius and published in the *Public Advertiser* on 30 January 1771, and upon a pamphlet written by Samuel Johnson at the bidding of the ministry. Junius's letter was attacked in the first instance in early February by "a ministerial writer" who styled himself *Anti-Junius*, again in the *Public Advertiser*.[297] The fact that the publisher of the *Public Advertiser* was willing to print the letters of both Junius and Anti-Junius indicates that the newspaper did not have one particular political point of view which it tried to convey on this issue, and that Woodfall was willing to print any opinions which were good for business. Junius's letter and his 6 February 1771 response to Anti-Junius were also criticised by Johnson in his *Thoughts on the Late Transactions respecting Falkland's Islands*.[298] This pamphlet was answered by an anonymous author in a *Refutation*; however, this is so poorly written and badly argued that it is hardly convincing. So, though the Falkland Islands crisis was a matter of grave concern which permeated the newspapers for several months at the end of 1770 and the beginning of 1771, in fact, it stimulated very little printed polemic; certainly a proportionately smaller amount than would be expected for a topic of so much interest. What is even more surprising is the very few instances in which anyone rose to the defense of the government in this literature. Except for Johnson's pamphlet and Anti-Junius's letters, there are only a handful of references to the Falkland Islands which indicate support for, or adopt an attitude of defense of, the ministry. This leads to the conclusion that the ministry was not extremely concerned with the sentiments manifested in the press or popular opinion generally, probably because by late 1770 North's ministry was secure enough in both Houses that it knew it would easily win divisions on this issue.[299] This is not to say that North, or any other politician, could remain completely isolated from the press and the opinions expressed in it, because just by

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[296] *Public Advertiser*, 21 February 1771.
[297] *Public Advertiser*, 4, 6, 11, and 22 February 1771.
[298] *Junius' Letters*, p. 225.
[299] P. D. G. Thomas, *Lord North*, see his discussion of the divisions for the winter and spring of 1770. p. 37.

acknowledging the existence of other opinions or pressure groups, he was being affected by them, even if only in a negative manner.

One of the more important conclusions to be drawn from this overview of the press coverage of the Falkland Islands crisis is that in many cases the newspapers were reporting pure fabrication and speculation. This gives rise to the question of whether or not these newspaper reports had any kind of effect, and if so, was this effect felt even when the reports were false? In order to answer this question it is necessary to examine an aspect of the crisis where actual concrete effects can be measured. The only area where this occurred was in the economy, because it is possible to determine if trade, insurance, stocks and other aspects of economic activity demonstrated a reaction to press reports whether or not these reports were myth or reality. It can be assumed that the reports in the newspapers measuring the rate of insurance premiums and of the change in stock prices were fairly accurate, as these were easily obtained and verifiable. In comparing these to the changes in the belief that war was probable, or the degree of fear of war which existed at any given time in the press, and among the negotiators, it is possible to determine whether or not these economic conditions changed with the pattern of variations in the reports. In so doing, it will be possible to see if those reports actually had some kind of effect on the buying and selling of stock and of insurance. There were, of course, other economic indications of the effects of the crisis and these will also be discussed.

It is possible to divide the reports about the economic effects of the Falkland Islands dispute into different categories in order to discuss them and their implications in a more coherent manner. Aside from the reports about stocks and insurance which will be dealt with separately, there were also several references printed about the effect of the crisis upon British shipping and the problems caused by this dispute for those merchants involved. Some of the reports dealt with the actual cost of arming for a prospective war, while others described specific dislocation of economic activity which resulted directly from the fear and uncertainty created by the international unease.

It must first of all be recognized that the information reported about the stocks and insurance premiums is quite irregular and can provide no more than an impression of the nature of the fluctuations in order that these can be compared with the incidences of greatest tension about the probability of war. The initial reports about the rising costs for insurance were printed immediately after the *Favourite* docked in England and the news of the Spanish seizure of Falkland Islands was made public. Although insurance costs immediately increased, the uncertainty of whether or not a war would actually occur was taken into consideration by the underwriters:

> Last night 20 per cent was given to insure ships from the Leeward Islands, but to return 15 in case of no war before their arrival.[300]

By the end of September, however, the "insurance on shipping and merchandize, at Lloyd's coffee-house, was advanced one and a half per cent."[301] These increases in the cost of insuring shipping were certainly a manifestation of the fear of a war caused by the news from Port Egmont. The next mention of an increase in insurance premiums also came at a time when the press was reporting several different rumours about the probability of a war. At the end of November, when the negotiators had almost despaired of settling the dispute in a peaceful way and the newspapers were printing stories like "the Heralds have been put on alert," one of the papers reported that "the insurance on Merchant ships at Lloyd's, was advanced from four to ten per cent, on outward-bound West Indiamen."[302] It was also at this time that the *Middlesex Journal* printed a report implying that the dispute was costing the Spanish a great deal as well, as it stated that "upwards of five hundred thousand pounds; Spanish property, has lately been insured there at very high premiums."[303] Though there was no mention of insurance rates throughout the rest of December, there were reports at the beginning of January 1771, that "Spanish property" was being insured at very advanced premiums.[304] This was a period when the ministers greatly feared that a war would occur.

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[300] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 24-26 September 1770 and *Middlesex Journal*, 25-27 September 1770.
[301] *Middlesex Journal*, 27-29 September 1770.
[302] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 28-30 November 1770.
[303] *Middlesex Journal*, 29 November-1 December 1770.
[304] *Middlesex Journal*, 29 December-1 January 1771 and *General Evening Post*, 1

However, the press had not indicated any immediate reason for the insurance rates to have gone up, such as the arrival of a messenger from Madrid bearing bad news, although there were the usual speculative reports about whether or not a war would occur. As there is no specific detail included about the rate of the increase of the premiums, this reference to insurance cannot be completely analyzed, though it does clearly indicate a rise in insurance costs.

The newspapers themselves claimed that the insurance prices were influenced by the various reports. The *Middlesex Journal* proclaimed that a report which said there would be no war "had a considerable effect upon the policies of insurance;" this clearly meant that the costs had dropped.[305] The last report about the effects of the Falkland Islands dispute on insurance costs was published late in February:

> Saturday morning the premium on insurance on ships and merchandize fell upwards of two per cent, at the several underwriters office in the city, on account of the arrival of the ratification of the late convention between this Court and that of Spain on Thursday last.[306]

The author of the above quotation took it for granted that the press report about a ratification had resulted in the drop of insurance rates.

The earliest discussion of the effect of the possibility of a war upon the stock market was printed in mid-September, when there occurred a drop in the price of stocks. The report attributed this drop to the fear and uncertainty caused by the government's naval rearmament policy. This report gives a fine explanation of the correlation between the reason for selling stock and its concomitant drop in price with the probability of war:

> We assure them, on the best authority, that the fall of the stocks at this time is on rational grounds. Whether we are at the eve of a war, or are neccessitated to make formidable preparations by way of precaution, certain it is, the Government must be put to extra charges, which will require extra-supplies, and this of course will raise the value of money.[307]

The *Middlesex Journal* also reported that the government was desperately trying to prop up the falling stocks, but to no avail because the news brought by the *Favourite* "occasioned the

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[304](cont'd) January 1771.
[305]*Middlesex Journal*, 3-5 January 1771.
[306]*Middlesex Journal*, 23-26 February 1771.
[307]*Middlesex Journal*, 15-18 September 1770.

stocks to fall three per cent."[308]

The next report dealing with stocks was printed on 28 September and said that the news brought by a courier from Madrid was good and the Spanish had promised the restitution of Falkland Islands. This story was not accurate, of course, as there had not been any courier or message recently arrived from Madrid. This piece of fiction might have been planted by the government because it was also stated that "this report had the desired effect, and raised the stocks at least three per cent."[309] Of the rest of the examples surveyed which mention the price of stocks, one is a diatribe against North's ministry, citing the fall in stocks as a result of the government's incompetent policy-making.[310] Another of the references was printed at the same time that rumours that a new agreement had been reached between the two courts was also circulated, and though the report initially stated that there had not been an accommodation, it also added that "notwithstanding this report, stocks rose yesterday two per cent."[311] The last of these references reported that the stocks had risen two per cent but did not credit this increase to the fact that any fresh news had arrived about the negotiations, but that this was "soley[sic] occassioned by the shutting up the funds till the 20th of January next during which interval little or no jobbing can be done at Jonathan's."[312]

This overview of the fluctuations in the price of insurance and stocks, as these were reported in the press, is indicative of the role which newspaper reports, whether they were fact or fiction, played in the development of the economic effects of the Falkland Islands crisis. As these two aspects of economic activity were so susceptible to the confidence or lack thereof which people placed in the government's ability to formulate policies which would benefit British interests, they fluctuated according to what people believed, even when that belief was based on inaccurate reports.

Another measure of the effect of the Falkland Islands dispute upon economic activity can be seen in the press reports concerning British shipping and the disturbances within the

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[308] *Middlesex Journal*, 22-25 September 1770.
[309] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 26-28 September 1770.
[310] *Gazateer*, 6 November 1770.
[311] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 19-21 November 1770.
[312] *Gazateer*, 5 December 1770.

trading community caused by these international tensions. This dispute was of great interest to the merchants because their property and investments were endangered by the threat of war. The letter written by the admiralty office and sent to Lloyd's coffee-house on 24 September 1770 was the first official indication to the merchants that they should be concerned, although there had been a fall in the price of stocks about a week before this.[313] The fact that the merchants had been warned immediately caused speculation about the likelihood of war and this made the merchants try to find out precisely what was going on.[314] The threat of war held several implications for the merchants, and reports of the consequences of a war for British trade were published from late September until the end of February, when the dispute was settled. The first reaction to the news that Port Egmont had been taken by the Spanish was as follows:

> the British merchants concerned in the Spanish trade, have resolved to permit none of their ships to sail for any of the ports of that Kingdom without convoy.[315]

It was acknowledged that these fears and the need to take extra precautions would disrupt the normal trade.[316] One of the reasons for the prevalent uncertainty about, and resentment of, the dispute was the lack of information from the ministry about the state of the negotiations, especially in October and November, and this gave credence to the accusation that the government was withholding information so "that a few of their stockjobbing brethren may make their proper advantage of it."[317] The accusations that the diplomats were dragging out the negotiations for their own purposes were not restricted to British politicians. There were several reports that foreign government officials were playing the British stock market to their advantage because they were privy to information about the outcome of the negotiations.[318] It was published that the

> Spanish and French Ambassadors, together with their respective retinues, and foreign

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[313] *Annual Register*, 1770, p.147.
[314] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 24-26 September 1770 and *Middlesex Journal*, 25-27 September 1770.
[315] *Middlesex Journal*, 27-29 September 1770.
[316] *Bingley's*, #18, 6 October 1770.
[317] *Middlesex Journal*, 11-13 October 1770.
[318] *Public Advertiser*, 22 November 1770 and *General Evening Post*, 26-29 January 1771.

> connections, have cleared, upon a moderate calculation, during this last month, one hundred and fifty thousand pounds in the Alley.[319]

There was also a story published which stated that the secretary to a foreign ambassador (presumably M. Frances), had made over half a million pounds in the alley and that he was able to do this because "the Spanish minister had orders to sign the Declaration at least six days before he did: the above Secretary, and others, knew this; and duped their friends, who wanted to get intelligence."[320] Reports such as these, printed as they were, alongside gloomy predictions of the stagnation of British trade and numerous rumours about British ships in Spanish ports being seized and having to "slip their cables, and put to sea for fear of being stopped," did not help to increase the merchant community's faith that the ministry was acting in its best interests.[321] The various rumours about the seizure of ships, the need to convoy and the imminent embargo on shipping on the Thames, of course, caused incredible uncertainty, which resulted in serious delays of English shipping.[322] The merchants sought the government's assurance that a war would not be declared and refused to risk their investments until they had it; meanwhile, they were losing money because

> ships are now laden, and waiting in the river, which might instantly proceed on their voyages, if the Owners were assured that we should have no war.[323]

These fears prevailed throughout December and most of January,[324] and it was not until near the end of February that the merchants were assured that all was settled and the Spanish king had ratified the convention "to prevent the merchants making further applications for protection, as matters are finally adjusted between England and Spain."[325]

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[319]*General Evening Post*, 26-29 January 1771 and *Middlesex Journal*, 29-31 January 1771.
[320]*Gentleman's Magazine*, xxxxi, 1771.
[321]*Middlesex Journal*, 4-6 October and 6-8 November 1770, *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 5-8 October, 28-31 December 1770 and *Gazateer*, 22 November 1770.
[322]For these rumours see: *Middlesex Journal*, 20-22 November and 29 November-1 December 1770, *Bingley's*, #26, 1 December 1770 and *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 30 November-3 December and 3-5 December 1770.
[323]*Public Advertiser*, 7 December 1770.
[324]*Middlesex Journal*, 27-29 December 1770, 29 December-1 January 1771 and 10-12 January 1771.
[325]*General Evening Post*, 21-23 February 1771 and *Public Advertiser*, 23 February 1771.

Another of the very controversial issues brought up by the Falkland Islands crisis was the discussion about whether or not press warrants were legal. This argument lies outside the parameters of this work; however, the impressment of sailors had very serious implications for the merchant marine and disrupted trade to an even greater extent.[326] Aside from the immeasurable losses suffered because of the merchants' reluctance to let their vessels sail because of their fear of a war, there also existed an inability to have the ships sail because of a shortage of seamen. One of the reports stated that this difficulty was costing the ministry the political support of the East India merchants because "of the little respect and care shewn by administration, in distressing the outward-bound India-ships, by stripping them entirely of their men."[327] It was also reported that the East India Company had attempted to deal with this problem by raising its seamen's wages from 25s. to 45s. per month.[328] This kind of reaction had several economic and social effects whose far-reaching political and diplomatic implications are well-illustrated by the following examples. First, one of the contentions reported in the *Public Advertiser* was that the impressment of seamen, caused initially by the Falkland Islands dispute, had in turn caused a shortage of seamen who were usually employed in navigating the corn vessels, which caused an increase in the cost of transportation. This increase was passed on to the consumer as follows:

> an advance in price of more that 21 per cent. in the course of 17 days, which advance in the price of wheat is equal to and will consequently occasion a rise very soon of four-pence added to the present price of a peck loaf, to which every individual within the bills of mortality must unneccessarily contribute.[329]

There were also other economic effects of the Falkland Islands dispute. The actual physical cost of arming the nation so that Britain could defend herself was of great concern to the public and was certainly a tangible economic consequence of the dispute.[330] Ultimately, of course, it was believed that this cost would devolve upon the individual in the form of

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[326]For a discussion of this issue from the point of view of naval administration, see; Daniel Baugh, *British Naval Administration in the Age of Walpole*, (Princeton: 1965), and Stephen Gradish, *The Manning of the British Navy During The Seven Years' War*, (London: 1980).
[327]*Gazateer*, 28 December 1770.
[328]*Lloyd's Evening Post*, 28-30 November 1770.
[329]*Public Advertiser*, 9 January 1771.
[330]*Gazateer*, 27 November 1770 and *London Evening Post*, 29-31 January 1771.

government loans and increased taxation, which in fact is precisely what happened, as Lord North managed to persuade parliament to vote an increase in the land tax because of the fear of war.[331]

One of the more specific illustrations of the kinds of effects this international dispute had was the disruption of a particular economic activity which in itself was not overwhelmingly critical, but which is indicative of the disruption this event caused;

> the British Logwood-cutters in the Bay of Honduras has[sic] most of them abandoned their stations for fear of the Spaniards, who according to appearances will soon commence hostilities.[332]

Another example of the disruption caused in the daily routine of traditional Anglo-Spanish trade was the report that

> the people at Malaga in Spain are now gathering all their fruit green, in order for exportation to England, being apprehensive of a speedy rupture with this kingdom.[333]

This incident, like the previous example, is in itself of no great consequence, but reveals that the decisions made at the highest levels of the state governments, within the cabinet and the King's closet, affected all types of economic activity, from the large joint stock companies to fruit growers on the Mediterranean coasts, and these seemingly inconsequential changes in patterns may have had dramatic impacts upon the lives of those individuals. Indeed, overall, the economic effects of this crisis were extensive and touched upon the activities of most of the individuals within the interested nations at that time. The reports in the press attest to the importance of this dispute, even though its outcome may appear to historians to have been undramatic and anti-climactic.

It is evident from this discussion that the British press reported extensively on the Falkland Islands crisis, and that this indicates that the public was interested in the outcome of the dispute and was willing to pay in order to read about it. Though the ministry was not overly concerned with the influence of public opinion on this issue, and did not attempt to manipulate press reports to the extent which the opposition did, it could not afford to ignore the newspapers completely. The English newspapers printed any report concerning the

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[331] *Middlesex Journal*, 11-13 October 1770.
[332] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 5-7 December 1770.
[333] *Gazateer*, 27 November 1770.

Falkland Islands, whether it was true or not, and though they were often wrong, some of their reports about the negotiations followed the general development of the dispute. The fact remains, that even when the reports were inaccurate, they were able to affect various aspects of this period in the eighteenth century, for example, the British economy, and this influence should not be underestimated.

IV. THE HISTORIANS AND MORE RECENT CONCLUSIONS

The historical debate on the Falkland Islands over the past century or so has, like all crises of this nature, given rise to widely different interpretations of this event. The principal areas of contention among historians include the resignation of Lord Weymouth on 18 December 1770, James Harris's recall from Madrid on 21 December 1770, French intervention in the negotiations between Britain and Spain, and the existence, or not, of a secret promise by the English to abandon the islands. Finally, the long-term impact of the crisis on international relations, British politics and the British economy and society are all issues which can be examined historiographically as well as in relation to the information available from primary sources. This research will give a greater understanding of the Falkland Islands crisis of 1770: the different ways in which historians have written about it, how this has affected the various interpretations of the dispute, and the overall conclusions which can be drawn from an examination of both the primary and secondary sources for this event. A study of this nature will also serve to highlight the areas of the dispute which need more research or where a reevaluation of the evidence is necessary in order to achieve an accurate assessment of the crisis.

The first event which caused consternation in 1770, and is still puzzling historians, was Lord Weymouth's resignation from the Southern Department. This was an event of some significance because it was thought, by historians, to have affected the outcome of the crisis directly. Weymouth's resignation remained a mystery in the eighteenth century, and though his motivation was discussed in the press and in contemporary correspondence, no answers were found. Some reports stated that he "complained of his always having been treated of late like a clerk in office, and not admitted to any of the real secrets of state by Lord North,"[334] while other authors conjectured that it had been his eagerness to initiate hostilities against Spain which caused dissension in the cabinet and his ultimate resignation.[335]

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[334] *Middlesex Journal*, 1-3 January, 1771.
[335] Walpole, *Correspondence*, xxiii, Walpole to Mann, 18 December 1770, p. 255, and *Chatham Correspondence*, iv, Hamilton to Calcraft, 18 December 1770, p. 63.

The most generous historiographical interpretation of Weymouth's character and of his policy was put forward by Vera Lee Brown in 1922, when she wrote that "Weymouth represented the most moderate opinion in the British parliament on the situation."[336] Unfortunately, Brown's assessment is not supported by her sources, nor does she discuss the significance of Weymouth's desire to uphold British honour by recalling James Harris after the negotiations had stalled.[337] Brown's point of view was nonetheless espoused by one of her contemporaries, V.F. Boyson, who wrote that "Weymouth's desire had been, on the whole, for peace, and his dispatches had been non-committal."[338] He further emphasized this interpretation by stating that it was Rochford who "was more outspoken and believed war was inevitable."[339] Though this view of Weymouth's policy is disproved by the evidence to be found in the correspondence about the Falkland Islands crisis, it does serve as a possible motivation for his sudden resignation from the post of southern secretary on 18 December 1770. Other historians, however, have looked to Weymouth's actual policies and his ambitions in order to attempt an explanation for his withdrawal. In this instance, the thoughts of Horace Walpole have had an enormous influence on the topic. According to Walpole, Lord Weymouth took advantage of the Falkland Islands crisis in order to try and seize power in the cabinet by endeavouring to negotiate the entire settlement on his own, and to this end, "communicated as little as possible of the negotiations to Lord North."[340] Walpole suggested that Weymouth had a secret motive for wanting to keep his cabinet colleagues, and North in particular, out of the negotiations. Ostensibly, Weymouth had banked on the fact that a war would occur over the Falkland Islands dispute and that this would force George III to accept Chatham as his first minister once again. Exactly how this would benefit Weymouth's career was not explained, but Walpole also suggested that it was Weymouth's assistant, Wood, who was truly in awe of Chatham and hoped to effect his return to the cabinet. North was not the only person whom Weymouth attempted to dupe. Apparently when he wrote "to Robert

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[336]Vera Lee Brown, p. 430.
[337]Vera Lee Brown, p. 436.
[338]V. F. Boyson, *The Falkland Islands*, (Oxford: 1924), p. 67.
[339]V. F. Boyson, p. 67.
[340]Walpole, cited in L.H. Brown, p. 273.

Walpole, Secretary to the Embassy at Paris (whence Lord Harcourt was absent), his despatches were so mysterious and inexplicit, that Thomas Walpole advised his brother to send them back, or come away."[341] Julius Goebel, basing his argument upon Walpole's comments, asserted that Weymouth had decided from the beginning of the dispute that George III was in favour of fighting a war over this matter, and had committed himself to that end.[342] Walpole reiterated the notion that Weymouth had a self-interested reason for seeking to force the dispute to the point of a war, when he suggested that the Bedfordite members of cabinet were in league together against Lord North.[343] In fact, Lord Gower, one of Bedford's followers, did not support Weymouth's supposed ambitions, because when the Southern Secretary retired, Gower remained in office, which was unusual as they were both members of the same party.[344] In order to counter this attack on his primacy in the cabinet, Lord North and the "Scottish Junto", which Walpole thought existed, "brought back the King from his martial system," because they feared the return of Chatham.[345]

One of the nineteenth century historians who discussed this issue agreed with Walpole that Weymouth had written meaningless dispatches, but stated that he was playing a double game "in order to be able to keep his place, whether North or Chatham carried the day."[346] This reasoning might have served to explain his dispatches, but it certainly would not have provided him with a good motive for his resignation. This interpretation does not account for the fact that Weymouth remained friendly to the ministry after his resignation, nor is it substantiated by any mention of such suspicions in George III's correspondence with his other ministers.

The historiographical tradition which has carried the most weight upon this issue, espoused by Iberian as well as North American and British historians, is one which points to Weymouth's refusal to compromise and accept reasonable offers of reparation from Spain.

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[341]Walpole, *Memoirs*, iv, p. 123.
[342]Julius Goebel, pp. 313-314.
[343]Walpole, *Memoirs*, iv, p. 123.
[344]P. D. G. Thomas, *Lord North*, p. 47.
[345]Walpole, *Memoirs*, iv, pp. 157-158.
[346]*Fitzmaurice*, i, pp. 414-415.

This notion was accepted as a cause for Weymouth's resignation by his contemporaries. It was mentioned in the correspondence of the day that the ministry had decided to make a firm stand against Spain and that "from this high tone, the cabinet are now inclined to depart, and of this Lord Weymouth complains."[347] In light of this, once the king had accepted the idea that a peaceful settlement to the dispute was possible, the ministers were in a position to oust Weymouth, using his intransigence as an excuse. This interpretation of Weymouth's refusal to compromise was primarily fostered by the secretary to the French ambassador, Frances, who in the end circumvented Weymouth's authority completely, and negotiated a settlement to the dispute directly with Lord North.[348]

Compared to the other ministers, Weymouth did appear eager to commence hostilities. For example, Lord North, when writing to George III about Weymouth's suggestions for military preparations, stated that his ideas should be discussed further in the cabinet, as they seemed precipitate. North informed his monarch that:

> Lord Weymouth wished I would name an Admiral for the Mediterranean Squadron and give orders for augmenting the Army. The former I thought ought to be proposed first at a Cabinet meeting the latter I thought ought to be deferred until Monday by which time we should know whether the Ambassador has powers to conclude in a manner suitable to our just demands.[349]

Incidents such as this led some historians to believe, contrary to what Vera Lee Brown and Boyson had written about the Southern Secretary's moderation, that he was actually bellicose and that it was the "decided intransigence of Weymouth" concerning the rights of sovereignty to the islands which prevented a peaceful solution to the problem.[350] Gil Munilla also contradicted Brown and Boyson when he wrote that "save Weymouth, none of the ministers really wanted a war."[351] In reality, Lord Weymouth's reactions to the offers made by the Spanish court were in accord with George III's demands of the acceptable minimum reparation. After having been refused this minimum reparation by Grimaldi, the Spanish first minister, Weymouth suggested to the cabinet that James Harris be recalled and that England

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[347]*Chatham Correspondence*, iv, Hamilton to Calcraft, 20 December 1770, p. 62.
[348]Julius Goebel, p. 322.
[349]*George III, Correspondence*, ii, North to King, 23 November 1770, p. 17.
[350]Octavio Gil Munilla, *Malvinas*, p. 115.
[351]Octavio Gil Munilla, *Malvinas*, p. 110, author's translation.

use force to obtain satisfaction. Thus, he decided that the only honourable course of action, to be taken in early December, was a declaration of war. This idea was rejected out of hand by the cabinet at a meeting on 5 December 1770.

It is obvious from this decision that North was not the only minister who sought to contradict Weymouth's proposals. Lord Rochford, who was at that time the Northern Secretary, informed the king on 6 December 1770 that Weymouth "must be overruled in a measure so destructive whilst there is the least glimmering hope of its being accommodated." The measure which Rochford meant was a pre-emptive strike against France in India. But Rochford was not dealing with Weymouth in a straightforward manner, because he also added that he would "continue to be watchful to the minutist event at this critical period, and will not leave your majesty ignorant one moment of anything essential that passes."[353] Having set himself up as the king's spy against Weymouth, Rochford proceeded to act as an intermediary between the monarch and his Southern Secretary when Weymouth finally decided that "it was impossible for him to go on contradicted by your Majesty's servants on five occasions and where his own deparment was immediately concerned.[353] Now that Weymouth had been isolated within the cabinet to the point where he could no longer formulate the policies for which he was responsible, his only alternative was to withdraw gracefully, which in fact he did. The odd thing about the way in which Weymouth resigned was that it was Rochford who informed the king about the details which this entailed. Rochford's interference becomes evident from an examination of the correspondence of George III. He wrote to the king that Weymouth suggested moving Lord Sandwich to the Northern Department and then Weymouth's brother, Henry Thynne could be offered the position of Postmaster General. Rochford then acknowledged his own subordinate position in relation to North by adding that "Lord North has been informed by me of this arrangement and seems to think it very feasible."[354] Though it appeared that Rochford was instrumental in orchestrating Weymouth's resignation, it is clear that he was overstepping the bounds of his authority, albeit with the

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[353]*George III, Correspondence*, ii, Rochford to King, 6 December 1770, p. 175.
[353]*George III, Correspondence*, ii, Rochford to King, 10 December 1770, p. 182.
[354]*George III, Correspondence*, ii, Rochford to King, 11 December 1770, p. 183.

king's knowledge and tacit approval. This was demonstrated by Rochford's letter to the king on 12 December 1770, when he wrote that:

> it strikes Lord Rochford that it will be more adviseable for him to tell Lord Weymouth that he Lord Rochford received your Majesty's orders through Lord North with regard to your Majestys wish of his holding the seals a few days longer, as Lord Weymouth will be surprised at your Majestys conveying a message by me and it will come very naturally through Lord North.[355]

Rochford was eager to do everything in his power to expedite Weymouth's resignation and withdrawal, and managed to do this without alienating the former secretary. Notwithstanding the fact that the ministry could not operate if the ministers refused to compromise, and that some of them felt that Weymouth was unwilling to accept reasonable compensation from Spain, [356] Rochford had his own reasons for wanting Weymouth out of the way. He aspired to the Southern Secretaryship and, in fact, did eventually replace Weymouth in that position.[357]

Two historians who examined this incident within the entire context of the Falkland Islands crisis presented another interpretation of the resignation. D. A. Winstanley wrote that "if the English demands had been diminished in extent after Weymouth's departure," it would have meant that a difference of opinion over policy had forced him to resign.[358] This was not the case. L.H. Brown seconded this opinion in 1963 when he stated that "Lord Weymouth's fall did not bring any change in the government's policy."[359] After Weymouth resigned on 18 December 1770, Rochford proceeded to follow precisely the policy which had been advocated by the former secretary, when he sent Harris orders to return to England, an act which was tantamount to a declaration of war in Massarano's eyes. As the ministry continued to follow basically the same policy, it is obvious that the motivaton behind Weymouth's retirement was not simply a matter of intransigence on his part, nor of an insoluble difference of opinion. Winstanley resolved this dichotomy by stating that Weymouth realized a war was likely to

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[355]*George III, Correspondence*, ii, Rochford to King, 12 December 1770, pp. 183-184.
[356]*George III, Correspondence*, ii, North to King, 23 November 1770, pp. 172-173.
[357]L.H. Brown, p. 275.
[358]D. A. Winstanley, p. 400.
[359]L. H. Brown, pp. 290-292.

occur and that he was "totally unfit" to hold a position of great responsibility in such an event, so took the coward's way out and resigned.[360] The French historian François Rousseau stated that it was George III who acted decisively at this juncture, when he saw that there were differences of opinion and tensions in the cabinet, instead of trying to resolve these, he simply dismissed Weymouth.[361] L.H. Brown attributed Weymouth's resignation to North's skillful machinations. The Falkland Islands crisis gave North an opportunity to "gain a voice in the direction of foreign policy" and, incidentally, get rid of his chief rival for the premiership.[362] P. D. G. Thomas concurred with the idea that North had deliberately eliminated Weymouth and also stated that North was then able to consolidate his power within the ministry by appointing Sandwich and Halifax, men who were his followers, and by seeing that Rochford and Gower were "sweetened by patronage."[363]

An examination of the cabinet intrigues and English politics at the highest level shows that Weymouth's resignation was certainly facilitated by the Falkland Islands crisis. North needed to shuffle cabinet appointments and obtain the support and loyalty of all the ministers, if he was to survive as first minister, and his task was eased by Rochford's willingness to oust Weymouth in order to succeed him as Southern Secretary. That Weymouth's policies or administrative plans were not in themselves the cause of discontent, as the majority of historians have usually stated, is evidenced by Rochford's decision on 21 December 1770 to recall Harris, and by the later developments in the distribution of power within the ministerial portfolios, when George III advocated a plan which had originally been suggested to him by Weymouth. The king wrote:

> ...a thought has occurred to me if he (Suffolk) can not speak French which is an absolute requisite for one who is to treat with Foreign ministers, whether Lord Rochford could not transact the whole department of Foreign affairs, which is the case in every other court and then Lord Suffolk might have the home departments which would be composed of all domestick affairs with the addition of Scotland and Ireland.[364]

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[360]D. A. Winstanley, p. 400.
[361]François Rousseau, *Règne de Charles III D'Espagne (1759-1788)*, ii, (Paris: 1907), p. 76.
[362]L. H. Brown, pp. 312-313.
[363]P. D. G. Thomas, *Lord North*, p. 49.
[364]*George III, Correspondence*, ii, King to North, 13 January 1770, pp. 205-206.

The reorganization of the cabinet which was facilitated by the Falkland Islands crisis provided North with the opportunity to overcome the discordant elements in the ministry and he was thus able to face the opposition in Parliament with a strong and stable administration to back him.[365] The political intrigue at the cabinet level was furthered by Rochford's willingness to press Weymouth until his position was untenable and so, the personal ambitions of the politicians involved should not be underestimated in any assessment of the outcome of the Falkland Islands crisis.

Another of the aspects of the dispute which is discussed in the historiography of the Falkland Islands crisis and which is intimately related to Lord Weymouth's resignation, is the recall of James Harris from Madrid. Lord Rochford's letter of 21 December 1770, ordering Harris to leave the court of Charles III, has caused confusion among historians because it was a completely irrational act if one accepted the premise that Lord Weymouth had resigned because of an unwillingness among the cabinet ministers to take any aggressive measures against Spain. In that case, the fact that Weymouth had resigned on 18 December and just four days later, Rochford had implemented a policy which Weymouth had suggested, made no sense. Rochford had written to the king about the cabinet meeting of 5 December, in which Weymouth had made his proposal and this had been turned down by the other ministers. They feared that such a move would destroy any chance of an accommodation being reached with Spain, and so, as Rochford wrote, "the rest of your majestys[sic] servants rather than be disunited in this critical situation acquiesced so far, as to resolve to send no messenger at all."[366] There is no further reference to this issue in the king's correspondence until Rochford had already sent the order of recall, although the ministry must have been uncertain about the outcome of this act because it kept it a well-guarded secret. The ministers did not inform the Spanish ambassador of this initiative until 3 January 1771, and there was no mention of the matter in the British press until 15 January 1771.[367] Even the opposition did not get wind of

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[365]P. D. G. Thomas, *Lord North*, p. 49.
[366]*George III, Correspondence*, ii, Rochford to King, 8 December 1770, pp. 179-180.
[367]*Middlesex Journal*, 12-15 January 1771, *Public Advertiser*, 17 January 1771, and *General Evening Post*, 17-19 January 1771.

this drastic step until 14 January.[368] Masserano's reaction when he was informed of the recall was as Rochford had expected, unfavourable to the extreme, which again has caused consternation among historians because Rochford had fully expected Masserano to view the recall as a virtual declaration of war, so why did he order Harris back to England? This question becomes ever more problematic when it is examined through the king's correspondence, which shows that the ministers seriously considered sending Harris new orders to remain in Spain as early as 3 January, and were still debating this on 17 January 1771.[369] It was only on 18 January 1771 that Rochford wrote to Harris, ordering him back to Madrid.[370] The recall was a very important issue because it was thought, by Rochford's contemporaries and by historians, to have directly affected the outcome of the crisis. The most immediate interpretation of the event was that the ministry had taken a daring step in order to force the Spaniards' hands, and that this policy was intended to frighten the Spanish negotiators into meeting England's demands. It was also supposed that Harris's recall meant that a war was inevitable and would soon be declared.[371] Walpole wrote that it was North who feared a war and that he was

> seized with a panic on Lord Weymouth's resignation, who he concluded, would vaunt of having advised war; he had figured to himself Lord Chatham, armed with national vengeance, and the Opposition bellowing against his pacific inclinations. Instead of striking the peace before any obstructions could be given to it, he had obtained from the Cabinet Council, four days after Lord Weymouth's retreat, the absurd direction to Harris to leave Madrid,-a rash act, dictated by fear, and from which nothing but Choiseul's fall could have extricated him.[372]

The Iberian historian Hidalgo Nieto was kinder in his assessment of why Harris was recalled, and simply stated that Lord Rochford was the decision-maker, in this instance, and that he had ordered the recall because any further negotiations would not have been consistent with the dignity of the crown.[373] Julius Goebel also wrote that Rochford had explained his action

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[368]*Chatham Correspondence*, iv, Calcraft to Chatham, 14 January 1771, p. 67.
[369]*George III, Correspondence*, ii, Rochford to King, 13 January 1771, p. 202, and 17 January 1771, p. 211.
[370]*Malmesbury Diaries*, i, Harris to Rochford, 9 February 1771, pp. 73-74.
[371]*Malmesbury Diaries*, i, pp. 70-71.
[372]Walpole, *Memoirs*, iv, p. 172.
[373]Manuel Hidalgo Nieto, p. 213.

by stating that as the negotiations had been suspended on 28 November 1770, there had been no use for a British representative in Madrid.[374] This excuse, of course, failed to explain why Rochford had rejected the idea of recalling Harris when Weymouth had suggested it. Goebel also tried to explain this action by suggesting that the English ministry suddenly decided that the British navy was so unprepared to fight that the only way they would gain an advantage was if they were the first to declare war, as this would allow them to get the British ships out of Spanish harbours.[375] This explanation, however, is not borne out by the evidence to be found in the correspondence relevant to the issue. It is evident from Rochford's eagerness to pacify Masserano that the English ministry had no desire to declare a war. Ultimately, Goebel implied that Harris's recall was purely a tactical error, the consequences of which might have been disastrous had it not been for Choiseul's fall from grace in France, and the subsequent defection of the French from the Bourbon alliance.[376] Octavio Gil Munilla interpreted this event in a completely different manner, stating that this policy was created and implemented solely at Lord Rochford's instigation. He wrote that Rochford brought with him to the office of Southern Secretary a new attitude about the form and thrust of imperial policy and that it was his belief that only a bold energetic imperial policy would bring the Anglo-Hispanic rivalries to an end. Thus, he took the initiative of recalling James Harris.[377] This interpretation is contested by the evidence to be found from an examination of Weymouth's resignation. There were no new policies implemented after Rochford took over the Southern Secretaryship. He simply followed the same policies which Weymouth had advocated. In light of Weymouth's resignation, the evidence indicates that Rochford used policy as a means of easing Weymouth out of office, but that in fact, there was no real difference of opinion

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[374]Julius Goebel, pp. 350-351.
[375]Julius Goebel, p. 350.
[376]Julius Goebel, p. 350.
[377]Octavio Gil Munilla, *Malvinas*, p. 128. ***El nuevo titular, exembajador en España, tiene la experiencia de su estancia en Madrid, donde ha presenciado de 1763 a 1766 la política de creciente reorganización del imperio, y el convencimiento de que solo medidas enérgicas puedan garantizar la resolución de las disputas hispano-inglesas. De acuerdo con este criterio, a los tres días de su nombramiento, ordena a Harris "que siendo ya enteramente innecesaria su permanencia en Madrid, se prepare a regresar con la prontitud conveniente, despues de despedirse en la forma acostumbrada."***

about the way in which England should treat the Spanish. The negotiations were stalled, and Weymouth had known it. Whether or not Rochford or North just panicked and decided to recall Harris because of fear of the opposition in parliament, cannot be conclusively answered; however, their actions did have repercussions which were thought to be of critical importance to the outcome of the Falkland Islands crisis.

The ministers were fortunate in one sense, because they were able to countermand Harris's recall very effectively, as he had not actually left the vicinity of Madrid. His new orders were presented to him only twenty leagues from the city.[378] Apparently Harris had a mistress in Madrid whom he was loathe to leave, so he had gone to a neighboring village and from there would secretly reenter the city every night and "dine" with her.[379] This fact gave rise to an entirely different interpretation of the negotiations between Spain and England by the Spanish historian, Hidalgo Nieto. Whereas historians had traditionally viewed the Falkland Islands crisis as an event when Spain was at the mercy of her alliance with France, because she could not fight England alone, and, that Grimaldi always followed Choiseul's lead, Hidalgo Nieto examined Harris's actions and concluded that he was allowed to remain within such proximity to Madrid for practical political reasons. He wrote that the Spanish court did not want to lose sight of the British representative as long as there existed the possibility of a renewal of the negotiations, and a satisfactory settlement to the dispute.[380] In order to maintain the appearance, at least, of independence, Grimaldi refused to see Harris when he presented himself at court after having been ordered back to Madrid. In this instance, however, Grimaldi's stand served only to highlight his country's impotence in the face of the circumstances surrounding Spain's diplomatic isolation, and so he was forced to accept Harris's solicitations. The incident of Harris's recall serves to emphasize different aspects of the Falkland Islands crisis, depending upon the interpretation of the historians concerned. It

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[378] *Malmesbury Diaries*, i, pp. 70-71.
[379] François Rousseau, ii, p. 79.
[380] Manuel Hidalgo Nieto, p. 215. "*desde donde en secreto venía todas las noches a Madrid-muy probablemente con el consentiniento tácito de la Corte española, a quién interesaba no perder de vista el represante ingles, facilitandose asi una reanudación de relaciones-para ver a su dama.*"

has been viewed on the one hand as evidence of the English ministry's strength, but also, on the other, of its weakness; of the Spanish ministry's independence from, and dependence upon, France. It certainly reflects upon the question of Weymouth's resignation as it removes all doubt that major differences of opinion about policy existed among the members of cabinet. Though there will probably always be doubt about the reasons behind Rochford's actions, there is no question about how they affected the crisis. An examination of the details of the negotiations shows that Masserano was informed of the recall on 3 January 1771, and that Harris himself only received his orders on 4 January. It was only three days later, on 7 January 1771, that Masserano received the new instructions from Grimaldi which were to ultimately provide a solution and settlement to the negotiations. From the chronology of this correspondence it can be deduced that Harris's recall did not have any effect upon the negotiations except to give the Spaniards the impression that the English ministry was being dishonest. In light of this, Rochford countermanded his previous order and Masserano's declaration was accepted.

Another of the areas of interest which historians have examined and which is also related to the questions of Weymouth's resignation and Harris's recall, is the issue of whether or not the French interferred in the negotiations between Spain and England, and, if so, what effect did this interference have upon the development of the crisis. This question was raised initially in Parliament when a motion for an Address seeking information on this topic was rejected 173 to 57 in the House of Commons.[311] There is actually no dissension among historians as to whether or not the French interferred, although this fact was not ascertained during the debate about the Falklands in Parliament. Though the ministry vehemently denied that the French had served as mediators or that they had been allowed to interfere in the negotiations, the suspicion still existed, and justifiably so. It is obvious from the correspondence between the king and Lord North, concerning North's meetings with Frances, the representative of the French ambassador, that France was meddling in the negotiations in a heavy-handed manner.[312] This is also proven by the message Choiseul sent to Grimaldi on

[311]P. D. G. Thomas, *Lord North*, p. 50.
[312]*George III, Correspondence*, ii, King to North, 28 November 1770, p. 174, North

10 December 1770, explaining to him how and why he had taken it upon himself to send a proposal to London which might end the negotiations. As he stated to Grimaldi, "the Falklands Islands might belong to Spain, but the war over them would belong to France as well as Spain."[383] However, when the English ministers were questioned about this in Parliament, they said that there was no correspondence to present and this was true, because as Walpole wrote "all had been verbal, and negotiated with Frances."[384] Walpole was the first to write that France's refusal to support Spain in a war for the islands was critical to the outcome of the dispute. Walpole stated that "Choiseul's fall, and the pacific disposition of the new ministers, convinced him (Masserano) that his king had no assistance to expect from France. His king, probably, from the same reasoning, had relaxed some of his pretensions, and sent powers to his ambassador to terminate his differences with us."[385] The controversy among historians on this point is not so much over whether or not there was French intervention in the dispute between Britain and Spain, but is more focussed on what effect the acknowledged intervention had. Did France's decision to withdraw her support from Spain in the event of a war actually cause the Spanish court to acquiesce to British demands, against its will? Walpole was certain that Choiseul's fall from power and the subsequent pacific ministry were decisive in causing Spain to reconsider her options.[386] D. A. Winstanley wrote that the outcome of the dispute had depended to an extent upon the attitude of France; however, he also wrote, contrary to the evidence, that there existed a "popular, though entirely baseless, belief that France had been allowed to interfere in the negotiations and had practically dictated the terms of the settlement."[387] Julius Goebel disagreed with this view when he wrote that Frances had been sent by the French ambassador to negotiate a settlement with Lord North. Goebel was in accord with Winstanley however, that France's actions had effectively shaped the outcome of the crisis as her defection "compelled Spain to make

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[382](cont'd) to King, 15 December 1770, pp. 184-185,, King to North, 26 December 1770, p. 185.
[383]cited in François Rousseau, ii, p. 76, author's translation.
[384]Walpole *Memoirs*, iv. p. 178.
[385]Walpole *Memoirs*, iv, p. 175.
[386]Walpole *Memoirs*, iv, pp. 114, 161-162.
[387]D. A. Winstanley, pp. 410 and 376.

diplomatic concessions in order to gain time for a rearrangement of the military and naval plans.[388] Alfred Bourguet wrote that Choiseul had become involved in the alliance with Spain with the intention that France would dominate the partnership, and Geoffrey Rice suggested that Spain did not attack England before 1770 because it was only then that she "felt sure enough of French support."[389] Both Allan Christelow and Paul Langford also agreed that the French refusal to fight caused Charles III to back down.[390] Octavio Gil Munilla concurred with this opinion when he wrote that Louis XV's letter to Charles III, withdrawing French support in the event of a war, had made a catastrophic impact upon the Spanish court.[391] Nicholas Tracy accepted this line of thought to a point; however, his interpretation favoured the psychoanalytical approach and is more open to doubt from the evidence available. He wrote that "from the first it was apparent that Spain was less important in the dispute than was France, and that the pressure of British preparations for war would most rapidly produce diplomatic developments by its effect upon the court of France."[392] Though it is certain that the English ministers did not discount France's influence, it is hardly true that they considered their negotiations with Spain as secondary. Finally, Margaret Cotter Morrison was willing to grant that Spain would have been unable to fight England alone, but she also was mistaken when she underestimated the Spanish court's ability to act independently. She stated that as soon as Spain realized that France would not support her, "the Spanish ministers were just in time to recall the English ambassador, who was already some miles from Madrid; the English demands were acceded to, and all thought of war was at an end."[393] This

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[388]Julius Goebel, pp. 307 and 375.

[389]Alfred Bourguet, "Le Duc De Choiseul et L'Angleterre: La Mission de M. De Bussy a Londre," *Revue Historique* v. 71, 1899, pp. 6-7, and Geoffrey Rice, p. 407.

[390]Allan Christelow, p. 26, and Paul Langford, p. 160.

[391]Octavio Gil Munilla, *Malvinas*, p. 125. "*cuando el 31 de Diciembre llegó a Madrid la carta de Luis XVI. La impresion fue catastrofica.*" These sentiments were expressed more emphatically by Glyndwr Williams in 1966 when he wrote that the "decisive developments were in France," and that when "Choiseul was dismissed, a chagrined Charles III was forced to negotiate." Glyndwr Williams, p. 192.

[392]Nicholas Tracy, p. 55.

[393]Margaret Cotter Morrison, "The Duc de Choiseul and the Invasion of England, 1768-1770," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*. 3rd Series, v. iv. 1910, p. 185.

interpretation again is not borne out by the evidence to be found in the diplomatic correspondence between Rochford and Harris about Grimaldi's reaction to Harris's reappearance at the court of Madrid.[394] Although historians agree that France was influential in this dispute, there are variations in the degree of influence she was thought to have wielded. The entire notion rests, however, upon the question of who actually controlled the diplomatic negotiations and what was their motivation. It is interesting to note that all of the authors were willing to grant France the dominant role in her relationship with Spain, even in an instance when it was Spain's interests that were at stake. Obviously, Spain had counted on French support and the withdrawal of that support caused Grimaldi and Charles III to reconsider their alternatives. However, there is no firm evidence to prove that Spain was bent on fighting a war over this issue at any cost, and only agreed to a settlement because of the loss of her ally. Neither is there any evidence to suggest that Grimaldi or Charles III ever considered Spain's interests as secondary to those of France.

One of the more fascinating and important issues relevant to the Falkland Islands crisis, which is also a topic of historiographical controversy, is the question of whether or not the North ministry secretly promised the Spanish that England would abandon the Falkland Islands. The first mention of this idea was on 8 January 1771, when it was reported that the "Spaniards have agreed to give up Falkland's iles [sic] without any stipulation for a future accession of the right to them, together with some other secret requisitions made on the part of some old claims."[395] After this, when the signing of the Declaration and acceptance were announced, all of the news reports had a short paragraph which claimed that the secret article was believed to exist.[396] This question was of so much import because it affected the entire issue of sovereignty over the islands, and still does. The idea that Spain capitulated because the North ministry secretly promised to abandon the English claim to the islands has been generally accepted in the historiography of the conflict; however, this acceptance has been

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[394] *Malmesbury Diaries*, i, Harris to Rochford, 9 February 1771, pp. 73-74.
[395] *General Evening Post*, 5-8 January 1771.
[396] *London Evening Post*, 22-24 January 1771, *Middlesex Journal*, 24-26 January 1771, *Public Advertiser*,24 January 1771, *Bingley's*, 26 January 1771, *Public Advertiser*, 25 January 1771.

based upon the flimsiest of evidence, and in several cases, on no evidence at all. Basil Williams wrote that the agreement was only "obtained after a private hint had been given that no more English settlements would be made on the Falkland Islands."[397] Williams suggested that there was no evidence that Rochford had ever made such a promise, but that French sources presented the possibility that "other less responsible ministers" may have hinted at this.[398] Though most historians agree that this promise existed, some are less adamant than others, and a few even dispute this fact.

A most decisive, and certainly very influential, interpretation of the issue was presented by Julius Goebel in his analysis of the right of sovereignty over the islands. After a lengthy discussion of how and why the promise was made, Goebel strongly concluded that "the British ministry insisted that the assurances were given 'neither officially nor confidentially,' and yet it cannot be denied that they *were* given and that they were the motivating inducement for the Spanish action."[399] He based this assertion on the evidence that on 25 January 1771, at George III's levee, the king greeted the Spanish ambassador, Masserano, in a friendly manner and told him that the Spaniards could "rely upon his good faith in the treaty." Goebel interpreted this statement to be a subtle confirmation, by the king, of North's promise to abandon the islands at some future date. His only documentation for this assumption was a letter written by Isaac Barré to Chatham on 22 January 1771, in which he stated, "it is whispered that there is a secret article to save the rights and pretensions in that country of the crown of Spain, which seems to promise our abandoning the spot silently, upon some future day."[400] This was written by an ardent member of the opposition who did not mention where he had heard about the secret agreement. It was penned by a person who had an interest in embarrassing the ministry and was probably less than objective. Goebel further mentioned the secret agreement several times and, in fact, based a substantial part of his argument about sovereignty upon the existence of such a promise. Throughout his analysis, however, he cited the diplomatic correspondence of only French or Spanish authors,

[397]Basil Williams, p. 272.
[398]Basil Williams, p. 272.
[399]Julius Goebel, pp. 362-363.
[400]*Chatham Correspondence*, iv, Barré to Chatham, 22 January 1771, p. 72.

who had an interest in this issue, to support this thesis.[401] It is difficult, therefore, to accept Goebel's assessment, as it is based on evidence which is suspect. Notwithstanding this lack of concrete support for his argument, Fritz and Olga Hoffman took Goebel at his word when they wrote that "Goebel has shown that at the time of the exchange of notes, Lord North and his secretary for the Southern Department, the Earl of Rochford, gave their solemn word that the fort and port of Egmont would be returned to Spain in the not too distant future."[402] They attempted to strengthen this argument by stating that there was no written record of the agreement because it had been made only verbally, and that "moreover, even contemporary works mentioned the agreement."[403] The Hoffmans however, did not state that only people who had something to gain from the existence of such a promise mentioned it in the eighteenth century. Another author who depended upon Goebel's judgement on this question was Lucy Sutherland, when she edited one volume of Edmund Burke's correspondence. Basing her argument on Goebel, she wrote that "there were grounds, however, for their belief that there was a secret understanding that Port Egmont would be abandoned."[404]

The belief that this promise existed has lasted throughout the twentieth century. It spans English, French, Argentine, and Iberian historiography. François Rousseau mentioned it in 1907, and it was advocated by Charles Petrie, Paul Langford and P. D. G. Thomas in the 1970s.[405] Thomas wrote that:

> at the end of November he (North) intervened in the negotiations himself. Unable to make any formal concession, he nevertheless gave a private assurance to the French ambassador that Britain did not intend to keep the island and would in due course evacuate it if Spain gave way then. North had not obtained the prior sanction of his colleagues: but the cabinet promptly endorsed his proposal, with the condition that the promise of evacuation must remain secret.[406]

Thomas made this statement and reiterated that "the verbal promise of future British

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[401]Julius Goebel, pp. 309-310, 315, 361-363, 370, 383, 393-394, 409.
[402]Fritz and Olga Hoffman, p. 55.
[403]Fritz and Olga Hoffman, pp. 55-56.
[404]*Burke Correspondence*, ii, p. 188.
[405]François Rousseau, p. 81, Charles Petrie, *King Charles III of Spain. An Enlightened Despot*, (London: 1971), p. 139, Paul Langford, p. 160, and P. D. G. Thomas, *Lord North*, p. 48.
[406]P. D. G. Thomas, *Lord North*, p. 48.

evacuation was secret,"[407] without providing any support for his argument. The note at the end of his paragraph indicated the correspondence of George III, edited by Fortescue, as his source; however, there is no evidence in the letters cited which suggests that an informal promise was ever discussed by the ministers, and certainly none to suggest that such a promise was endorsed by the cabinet.[408] Vera Lee Brown mentioned the promise, which James Harris wrote was being spread abroad, but she did not make any decision as to whether or not it had actually been made.[409] J. Steven Watson gave this question a different twist when he wrote in 1960 that "in secret both sides agreed to evacuate the islands and so to avoid any immediate reopening of the squabble."[410] He also failed to cite any sources in support of this assertion.

The question of the secret promise was also addressed by Nicholas Tracy in his treatment of the 1770 Falkland Islands crisis from the naval perspective. His first controversial premise was that Bucareli's actions were "seen as part of a general challenge to the supremacy of British sea power" and that Port Egmont had been established simply as a "demonstration of Britain's superior strength."[411] Following through with this line of reasoning, Tracy wrote that North did not fear a war with Spain and so made no "diplomatic effort" to avert the disaster, because "the government plainly feared loss of international regard more than it feared war."[412] This premise was highly speculative at best. Obviously the king and his ministers were concerned that the honour of the British crown be upheld; however, contemporary sources also indicate that there were, in fact, serious diplomatic efforts made to avert a war. Tracy's further assertion that in order "to defeat Bourbon attacks on Britain's influence and position it was necessary to restore the credibility of Britain's naval strength," is actually undermined by his reasoning that North made the secret promise in order to get the Spanish to settle the dispute without fighting a war.[413] Tracy's

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[407]P. D. G. Thomas, *Lord North*, p. 50.
[408]*George III, Correspondence*, ii, pp. 172-182.
[409]Vera Lee Brown, p. 442.
[410]J. Steven Watson, pp. 154-155.
[411]Nicholas Tracy, pp. 41 and 45.
[412]Nicholas Tracy, p. 50.
[413]Nicholas Tracy, p. 52.

argument for the promise was weakened initially by his failure to cite any sources, other than Goebel, and secondly, his reasoning for the promise was not logical. If, as he stated, Britain was only concerned with the Bourbons' conception of her naval strength, how would this secret promise "constrain the Spaniards to concede to Britain's demands, apparently humbling themselves before Britain's naval might"?[414] If the entire diplomatic dispute was purely a show, as Tracy implied, Britain would not have impressed her enemies, the Bourbon powers, to any great extent, by secretly granting them the object of the dispute. Tracy's argument is also contradictory in that he stated that North was not willing to make a diplomatic effort to avoid a war over the islands, but yet, he was ostensibly willing to make a huge diplomatic concession, albeit secretly. Notwithstanding the non sequitors evident in Tracy's argument, he never provided concrete evidence for the existence of the promise.

Another advocate of the existence of the promise based his conclusion on deductive reasoning. Ricardo Zorraquin Becu wrote that North had promised to abandon the islands confidentially because he could not do so publicly. He then argued that the British did not act in good faith. Their attempts to retain sovereignty with the plaque they left there in 1774, and the fact that they did not mention a claim to the islands again until 1829, meant for this author, that they must have made the secret promise, and that this was the British way of trying to avoid the consequences of having made that promise.[415] This reasoning was also less than convincing as an argument for the existence of the promise. D. A. Winstanley attempted to deal with this problem by stating, first of all, that Barre's letter was the original source of the idea; however, he added that there was absolutely no concrete evidence for this suggestion.[416] He then found the same issue being mentioned by the French ambassador to England, the count de Guines, in 1771, who, when called upon to explain himself, was forced to admit that the discussion had been "a la reserve de milord Rochford." Winstanley decided therefore that:

> if the secretary of state for foreign affairs refrained from giving any promise to abandon the Falkland Islands, it may with safety be assumed that the utterances of

[414]Nicholas Tracy, p. 61.
[415]Ricardo Zorraquín Becú, p. 161.
[416]D. A. Winstanley, p. 408.

> the other ministers on this point were entirely unofficial, and made upon their own responsibility.[417]

His conclusion, based upon concrete evidence, was that if the promise existed at all, it was made completely unofficially and the source for this was to be found only in the correspondence between French diplomats.

Octavio Gil Munilla, who studied the 1770 crisis primarily from the Spanish perspective, examined the final declaration between Britain and Spain without even mentioning a secret article.[418] In the very last paragraph of his chapter about the Falkland Islands crisis, however, he suddenly suggested that the British had promised to abandon the islands at some time in the future. His source for this statement was the evidence cited in his previous work on the Falkland Islands crisis of 1770. In that monograph, Gil Munilla stated that Lords North and Rochford guaranteed in a confidential manner that the English would later abandon the islands.[419] He did not, however, cite a source for this information. He also reinforced the idea of the promise when he wrote that the Spanish signed the declaration for two reasons. One was the secret promise made by the English, and the second was that the Spaniards knew that little time would pass before they would find a new reason to create a rupture with England.[420] Gil Munilla finally wrote that the promise had been "*de caracter privado, no ministerial,*" but that it had nonetheless been given. He based this conclusion solely on a message from Masserano to Grimaldi.[421] If, as Gil Munilla stated, the promise was a major factor contributing to the Spanish agreement to settle the dispute, why did North not make it much sooner, in order to settle the dispute at the onset of the negotiations? The fact that Gil Munilla's sole source for this information was Spanish and that he had a good reason to try and make the declaration attractive to the Spanish court also weakened his argument.

The editor of James Harris's diaries, his grandson, the third Earl of Malmesbury, was one of the earliest authors to write that the secret article or promise had never existed. He

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[417]D. A. Winstanley, p. 409.
[418]Octavio Gil Munilla, *Rio de la Plata en la política internacional: Genesis del virreinato*, (Sevilla: 1949), p. 168.
[419]Octavio Gil Munilla, *Malvinas*, pp. 114-115.
[420]Octavio Gil Munilla, *Malvinas*, p. 139, author's translation.
[421]Octavio Gil Munilla, *Malvinas*, p. 143.

based this conclusion on a letter written by Harris to Rochford stating that the Spaniards were keeping the declaration as secret as possible. He further wrote that "they[the Spanish] also report that we have given a verbal assurance to evacuate Falkland Island in the space of two months."[422] The editor took this as an indication that the promise had never been made. "It appears from Mr. Harris's papers that the restitution[by the Spanish] was, both in letter and spirit, a bona fide one, without any such article."[423] This denial of the secret promise is not surprising, considering the quarter from which it came. The editor was, after all, Harris's grandson and had an interest in protecting his family's name. It was to his advantage, therefore, to claim that the North ministry, to which his ancestors had been attached, would not have made what Malmesbury considered such a dishonourable promise.

There were, nonetheless, other historians who agreed that the existence of the secret promise should not be accepted unquestionably. As early as 1908, G.B. Hertz wrote that there was no "substantial evidence on either side." However, he reasoned that "the absence of any Spanish expostulations in the diplomatic correspondence after 1771, and the circumstance attendant to the evacuation," pointed to the likelihood that the promise had never been made.[424] He also strengthened his argument by stating that between February and November 1772, the ministry seriously considered plans for the defense of the islands, which would not have made sense if the English were planning to abandon Port Egmont immediately.[425] Although Hertz did not cite his source for this information, his argument was accepted and quoted by the authors of a monograph on the Falkland Islands in 1960.[426] Finally, the Iberian historian Hidalgo Nieto concluded that without concrete evidence from the British archives for the Southern Department, there was no way of determining the thoughts or intentions of the English ministry. Without the extensive research which this would require, the supposed secret promise remained an insinuation, or vague hope without value, and that an explanation of the

[422] *Malmesbury Diaries*, i, Harris to Rochford, 14 February 1771, p. 77.
[423] *Malmesbury Diaries*, i, p. 78.
[424] G. B. Hertz, p. 141.
[425] G. B. Hertz, p. 141.
[426] Cawkell, *et al*, *The Falkland Islands*, (London: 1960), pp. 34-35.

actions of the Spanish court could not be based upon this fact.[427] Ultimately though, Hidalgo Nieto asserted that it was irrelevant whether or not the promise had been actually made, because the fact that it was believed to exist made it much easier for the Spanish court to agree to a settlement without losing too much face, and this enabled Spain to avoid a war against England which it could not hope to win alone.[428]

The dividing line among historians about this question transcended both nationality and period. Some of the early historians, such as Winstanley, did not give the idea of a secret promise much credence, while even the Iberian historians could not agree about this issue. Hidalgo Nieto pointed out the critical matter; all the historians discuss this issue and most of them suggest that the promise existed, without citing any concrete or indisputable sources. There is certainly evidence that suggests that a promise would have eased the way for a settlement of the dispute; however, it is hardly likely that a promise of such consequence would never have been mentioned in any of the correpondence between George III and his ministers, nor in any of the English diplomatic correspondence. It is evident that George III was informed of every step of the negotiations and North does not appear to have been the kind of man who would make such a promise without discussing it with his sovereign. The idea of a secret promise has recurred constantly in all of the historiography of the Falkland Islands crisis. This, however, is misleading because though historians have written about it as though it existed, they based their assumption on eighteenth century sources which palpably lack objectivity, and so, the question remains to be answered satisfactorily. The entire notion of the secret promise made by the North ministry appears, therefore, to fall under the aegis of nebulous assumptions accepted by many historians; a possible occurrence which would explain Spain's agreement to restore Port Egmont but which has never been satisfactorily documented and which thus remains to be proven. This is an aspect of the 1770 Falkland Islands dispute which requires further examination because it is significant to any evaluation of the crisis and the way in which the British and Spanish governments performed throughout

[427]Manuel Hidalgo Nieto, pp. 230-231.
[428]Manuel Hidalgo Nieto, p. 231.

the negotiations. If the promise did exist, this precludes the interpretation that France's decision not to fight forced the Spanish government to negotiate a settlement, or that Weymouth's resignation or Harris's recall had any effect on the outcome of the dispute, as well as being crucial to the question of sovereignty over the islands. It also means that the Spaniards managed to gain something substantial from the negotiations. Finally, the existence of the secret promise would suggest that the North ministry did not handle the crisis as coolly and adeptly as a first glance would suggest, or some historians have concluded.

There also exists a difference of opinion among historians about the overall effects of the crisis on British politics, economics, and individuals, and on international relations. Of course, much of these variations can be accounted for by the different emphasis which the historians placed on each aspect of the crisis and also upon their perspectives. An analysis of the crisis from the British political perspective produced a consensus among several historians that the Falkland Islands crisis was "the episode that enabled North to emerge as the dominant figure in the administration."[429] This view concurred with John Brooke's analysis of the division for the convention with Spain, when he concluded that "North's authority in the House was now established beyond doubt. He was the minister who commanded the confidence of both Crown and House of Commons."[430] Goebel also wrote that as the Falkland Islands crisis facilitated Weymouth's removal, this indirectly enabled North to gain ascendancy in the cabinet, and this, in turn, increased the prospects for a peaceful solution to the dispute.[431]

Apart from the information revealed about cabinet politics, the Falkland Islands crisis also served to highlight the relationship between the Houses of Parliament, and the role which the opposition played in eighteenth century British politics. The examination of the opposition campaign based upon this dispute demonstrated that the peers were crucial in directing the attacks in both Houses, and that it was the members of the House of Lords who formulated the policies for the opposition and who attempted to coordinate the campaign against North's

[429]See for example, P. D. G. Thomas, *Lord North*, pp. 46 and 51.
[430]John Brooke, p. 158.
[431]Julius Goebel, p. 325.

ministry. This crisis also served to highlight the opposition's endeavours to use the public in order to influence government policy, and their willingness to try to control public opinion by a judicious use of the press. The opposition members' attempt to unseat the government in this instance caused them to appear self-interested and unscrupulous because they were often unprincipled and inconsistent in their attacks on the government. The parliamentary campaign based upon the Falkland Islands crisis was a good opportunity for the opposition to try to gain power because it served as a focal point of attack and appealed to the interests of the widest political constituency possible. Though the opposition made a good showing in the divisions over this issue, the North ministry had such large parliamentary majorities by this time and used procedural tactics so well that it often avoided confrontations, and it was never actually in any danger. This is borne out by the fact that the government never really bothered to use the press as a political tool, so that most of the press reports about the Falkland Islands crisis are highly critical of the ministry and no written polemical debate developed on this question. Though the press did not measurably affect the political outcome of the dispute, it did have tangible effects on economic activity, especially in the realm of shipping and trade, as well as helping to cause fluctuations in both stock and insurance prices. Though the opposition tried to use the press to influence the formulation of policy on this issue, it was unsuccessful and its campaign lost its impetus and ground to a halt. So, though the Falkland Islands crisis had no dramatic lasting effect on internal British politics, the overall economic and social effects of the dispute should not be underestimated.

Another of the more practical effects of the crisis was a development in the structure of ministerial responsibilities with the evolution of the post of Foreign Secretary,[432] though the first actual Foreign Secretary was Charles James Fox, who received this position in 1782. Brown wrote that the crisis had also served to focus the nation's attention on the poor state of the British navy and highlighted the need for improvements in this area.[433] Walpole also mentioned this, but interpreted it differently by stating that the crisis showed "Spain and

[432]L. H. Brown, p. 303.
[433]L. H. Brown, p. 297.

France how soon we could prepare a force sufficient for our defence."[434] Nicholas Tracy wrote that the Falkland crisis was the "supreme test before the American Revolution of British ability to use sea power to retain the position it had won in the Seven Years War."[435] In his opinion, North and his colleagues consciously and successfully used the crisis as an opportunity to regain respect for British naval power.

On the international level, the crisis, in Goebel's opinion, had serious implications for the issue of sovereignty over the islands. He wrote that the secret promise to abandon the islands which was given in 1770 meant that Britain no longer had a claim to this territory.[436] That however, remains to be proven. The crisis also had serious effects upon international relations during this period. While most historians agree that this event had major repercussions on the relationship between France and Spain and their faith in the Family Compact, there is again some disagreement about the long-term effects of the dispute. Glyndwr Williams wrote that, although the peaceful settlement of the crisis weakened the alliance between France and Spain, "despite this coolness, the underlying motives which had brought France and Spain into close alliance in the years before 1770 remained unchanged."[437] Contrary to this opinion, Paul Langford considered the weakening of the Family Compact as the perfect opportunity for an Anglo-French entente. "For one thing it brought to the fore a convinced champion of rapprochement in the Duc d'Aiguillon."[438] Vera Lee Brown had also written that this event caused Spain's isolation because it revealed how dramatically weakened France had been during the Seven Years War. She added that it had been hoped that England would benefit from the strained relations between the Bourbon powers, but she did not say that an Anglo-French rapprochement was likely.[439] The French historian François Rousseau, viewing the crisis from his nation's perspective, wrote that an important effect of the dispute was the fact that it highlighted the tenuous links of the Family Compact and that it showed

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[434]Walpole, *Memoirs*, iv, pp. 175-176.
[435]Nicholas Tracy, p. 40.
[436]Julius Goebel, pp. 465-466.
[437]Glyndwr Williams, p. 193.
[438]Paul Langford, p. 160.
[439]Vera Lee Brown, pp. 477 and 448.

France's weakness by making apparent her inability to live up to her responsibilities.[440] Octavio Gil Munilla, basing his arguments on those of another French historian, Louis Blart, also wrote that the Falkland Islands crisis demonstrated the disillusionment which Spain suffered when she realized she could no longer count on France in a crisis of this nature.[441] He also stated that the crisis served to bring to the fore the deep animosity which the Spanish felt towards the British. As was noted above, these sentiments were based on commercial rivalry and the existing background of strain and tension between the two nations which was manifested in the general challenge by Spain to the supremacy of British seapower. The failure of the French-Spanish alliance gave Britain the hope of gaining an advantage against both nations. As a result of this, the crisis had several practical military effects. Both Hidalgo Nieto and Gil Munilla agreed that the crisis caused Spain to strengthen her defenses in America, and Gil Munilla made the case that it was this event which provided the incentive for the creation of the vice royalty of Rio de la Plata in order to try to protect the Spanish empire in South America.[442] This notion was seconded by David Rock in his discussion of the growing power which was being wielded by Buenos Aires during this period.[443]

Overall, the Falkland Islands crisis affected international relations by exposing the weakness of France and the concommitant instability of the Family Compact, by isolating Spain from her possible allies, by bringing to the fore the traditional animosity between Britain and Spain and by causing Spain to develop her imperial defenses via the creation of the viceroyalty of Rio de la Plata. On the national level, the Falkland Islands crisis served to enable North to emerge as the dominant figure in the British cabinet, facilitated the development of ministerial portfolios, and also provided an opportunity for the parliamentary opposition to rally its forces and attempt to gain power. The analysis of the opposition campaign based on this dispute, especially from the perspective of the British press, has shown that this crisis had concrete, measurable effects on the British and Spanish economies,

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[440]François Rousseau, ii, p. 81.
[441]Octavio Gil Munilla, *Malvinas*, p. 153.
[442]Manuel Hidalgo Nieto, p. 87, and Octavio Gil Munilla, *Malvinas*, p. 154.
[443]David Rock, *Argentina: 1562-1982. From Colonization To The Falklands War*, (Berkeley: 1985), p. 61.

and, on the social level, on the lives of individuals who were not even directly involved in the dispute. This discussion of the events which made up the crisis, when viewed within the context of both international and national interests, offers a better understanding of the whole Falkland Islands controversy, still so pertinent to British diplomacy today.

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